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VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

The Socialist has received his conceptions of political democracy from the individualist philosophers against whom, as a sociologist, he runs at full tilt. When he thinks of Society as an industrial organisation, he defines liberty as an opportunity given to an individual to develop and express his individuality in accordance with the industrial order of the time, and he assumes that the individual, both as producer and as consumer, as a creator of wealth and a user of it, finds freedom of action in ways which are set for him by the social medium which surrounds him and which determines the character of his activities and the nature of his satisfactions just as much as life in water determines the physiology of a fish. Liberty, in matters of social conduct, is thus nothing more than the harmony between an individual and Society. Society, considered as merely a collection of separate and free individuals, gives no key to the understanding of social problems.

A distribution of wealth effected by the competing interests of various economic classes in the community, each one looking after its own personal rights, is not accepted as just or rational by the Socialist, because he has a conception of economic co-ordination and of an

industrial order consciously organised, under which the individual struggle to survive and monopolise will be subordinated to social ends. Hence, in Socialist eyes, Radical individualism has broken down in economics and industry as completely as it did in social order when every baron was king, law-maker, and judge in his own barony.

But when we turn from economic and industrial considerations to politics, the breakdown of Radical individualism is not so obvious. Indeed, individualism is much less assailable as a political than as an economic creed. Its historical origin is political; even its apparent sanctions on the ground that the State has placed obstacles in the way of industrial development, are rather charges against the particular form of government which prevailed when modern industrialism came into being, than objections in principle to State activity *per se* in industry.* The Manchester school was, indeed, dead before it was born so far as its social economics were concerned. It was never more than a might-have-been. It was a theory which belonged neither to the eighteenth nor to the nineteenth century, but was an abstraction of some characteristics of both. But the political philosophy from which

* When Austin wrote in the *Edinburgh Review* (LXXV.) that there was always "a general presumption against the interference of governments with the interests and concerns of their subjects," he really meant by "government," "the government which I have experienced."

it sprung nurtured the feeble beginnings of Democracy. In the form of the Rights of Man, allied with Evangelicism, Nonconformity and Rationalism, it broke down the rule of aristocracy, the conception of government as the function of a privileged class distinguished either by birth or, later on, by possessions; it advanced the elected chamber from a position subject to the class of territorial magnates to one of supreme authority, and established the sovereignty of the mass of the people. The Reform Act of 1832 opened the floodgates of change. No one responsible for that Act meant to establish Democracy. Practically every reformer at the time protested that his intentions were different. The Whigs acted in the belief that they were only strengthening old constitutional practices by applying them to new conditions. Those who thought otherwise, or who claimed greater liberties for the common people were like discordant voices in a vast crowd. But when the floodgates were once opened, the waters rose in spite of the intentions of those who liberated them. The fondly nursed safeguards of the Greys and the Russells disappeared in the fulness of time, because a thing had been done which involved their disappearance. 1867 came, and 1867 was followed by 1884. No chapter in the history of politics illustrates more conclusively than that on the evolution of the democratic franchise, the fact that small beginnings result, by reason of their own momentum, in their own logical conclusions—not because men think

them out and consciously strive for them, but because tendencies and forces have been created and released which irresistibly flow towards them. Slippery slopes beset the feet of every statesman who moves at all—and earthquakes tremble below those who stand still.

These acceptable fruits of individualism in the field of politics have enabled it to enjoy an almost unchallenged possession there, and problems of government, such as whether there should be leaders, parties, cabinets, a representative system, and so on, are generally discussed from individualist standpoints by collectivists, whilst problems of industry, such as those relating to factory legislation, have been discussed from collectivist standpoints even by those proclaiming themselves to be individualists.

Democracy is continually used by Socialists to mean the right of the individual, or of a section of individuals, to rule—or to imply that every individual is, for all political purposes, to be regarded as the same as every other individual. This is the creed which has been embodied in America in the practice that the benefits of office "should go the rounds," and which is now the foundation of the theory that the Referendum is the purest form of Democracy, and that Democracy is inconsistent with leaders, executives, and governing committees of all kinds. In other words, Democracy is often used amongst Socialists as a principle of government opposed to political

organisation and to representative authority, and involving various fantastic forms of political anarchy from the abolition of parties to the distintegration of legislatures, from the absolute authority of local organisations to the incoherent government of a mass vote.

This is partly owing to habit. Through habit, the practice of the old enters the theory of the new, destroying its logical coherence and confusing its application, but keeping the stream of progress continuous. In our Socialism, the anti-Socialist spirit too often rears its head—just as the domestic dog turns round on his carefully prepared sleeping mat like his ancestor did to make a lair on the grass of the wilds—just as, in our Christian ceremonies are preserved the reminiscences of pagan rites—just as our mutton-chops, now eaten politely by means of knives and forks, are laid before us decorated with the paper frills they had to wear when we seized them between thumb and finger.

But when constructive collectivism is not merely the subject of an active propaganda, but has created a political party which has won a place in the House of Commons, it is impossible for that party to hold views on political democracy diametrically opposed to those it holds on industrial democracy. The Socialist political State cannot be opposed in its fundamental principles to the Socialist industrial State.

Now, as I shall attempt to show, the political State is inseparable from the existence of

Socialism, either as a rational theory of Society or as a form of industrial democracy. The fundamental difference between the Anarchist and the Socialist is that the former does not believe that a political State which works by the temporary surrender of the minority to the majority after the majority has declared itself, and which is secured, as a last resort, by force, ought to exist in an industrial community. I cannot imagine such a community without a political State. The industrial community of co-operative service givers—which is the Socialist community—must retain to itself the right to say that the will of the majority is its own will for the time being, and it must also possess the power to carry out that will. It can only do this by legislation, by administrative order, by bye-law, by inspection, by punishment, by award—in short, by exercising the legislative, executive, and judicial functions of a political State. Any other system, such as that of Anarchism expounded in *The Conquest of Bread,* is, in reality, the establishment of the individual will as a sovereign authority over the communal will. The law and order, first of all established by democratic means and then enforced by the coercive power of the State, is the only condition under which the individual can retain his freedom living in a modern industrial community, the economic functions of which are carried on by the organisation of subdivided labour, by the common ownership of the land and capital required for common use, and by the social maintenance

of a vast network of markets and systems of exchange. A co-operative commonwealth must have a common will which it enforces to some extent or other on the individuals in the commonwealth. In such a commonwealth, the individual is part of a system of economic forces which will control him if he does not control them. And he cannot control them alone, but in co-operation with others who are also seeking to protect themselves.

On the other hand, the Socialist must build up his system of political obligations so carefully as to be able to see how far it goes and what it involves and does not involve. From this arises a set of practical political problems of great importance. "The tyranny of the majority," "the iron law of a bureaucracy," "strangling by red tape," and similar expressions have some meaning, and can be guarded against only by a patient study of the nature and limits of democratic political obligation and the working of democratic institutions.

But the Socialist has been so often offered political instead of social changes that he has come to regard political reform as a red herring which designing capitalists draw across the path of the people when the people are about to run to earth some grievance of real importance. An outcry against the House of Lords, a demand for women's suffrage, a protest against the encroachments on constitutional liberty by the monarchy, are always regarded by some section of our Socialist movement with suspicion lest they be but the

tricks of the wary to occupy the attention of the unwary. And indeed there is no little sagacity in this suspicion. But if irrationally entertained, it itself becomes a dangerously-scented red herring, and the Socialist may commit the mistake of becoming a wreck on Scylla whilst avoiding destruction in Charybdis.

To this suspicion of political reform must be traced in part the dying ardour of a love for political liberty. Democracy, as the Radicals understood it, had a freshening effect upon the political mind, and protected it against sycophancy and servility, kept it independent of corrupting influences, and saved it from selling its birthright for a mess of pottage—sometimes even for husks which swine would not eat. The working-class Radicalism of the 'sixties may have had no "economic basis," but it was of the salt of the earth. We may laugh at the rhapsodies that have been sung as litanies in the temples of Freedom, but they were the means by which the mind of man gathered strength and determination to throw off its fetters; and when these rhapsodies were ringing most defiantly, there were rulers and authorities who could not afford to analyse the sentences in which the litanies were couched and laugh at the sorry result. A people who greet the praises of political freedom with a yawn are already offering their wrists for the shackles of servitude.

The practical consequences of this disregard for political liberty and independence are

immediate. It is seen in a lowering of democratic institutions in the public estimation. Efficient Parliamentary government can be maintained only if the people have some respect for Parliamentary institutions—if they have what Mill called "constitutional morality." The decline of Parliamentary influence I therefore regard as a sign of democratic decay, not a proof of superior democratic intelligence. To reform the House of Commons is good, to degrade in the imagination of the people even a bad House of Commons is a crime—a most heinous crime for Socialists. For, as the industrial State of Socialism has both to be brought into existence and, when in existence, kept in existence, by the political State, the Socialist more than any other citizen should preserve that respect for the political institutions of Democracy which alone makes the decrees of these institutions acceptable to the people. We hardly appreciate how delicately adjusted is the whole of our system of government. Remove from it the trust and the deference of the people, make it common and unclean, and it begins to crumble to dust like a human body from which the breath of life has gone. And what can be put in its place? Nothing. Every circumstance favourable to an aristocracy, to the control of the titled classes and of the well-organised sections who are interested in keeping the people subject intellectually and politically, even to a despotism—particularly if the despot is a charlatan—then comes into

existence. The economic truths of Socialism, its industrialism, and its sociology, must remain the vainest of vain dreamings unless we preserve among the people the political frame of mind which can appreciate democratic liberty and worth. When "a man's a man for a' that" is recited without making the blood tingle, the *man* has ceased to be. The objection that Democracy was to disrupt Society, is hardly heard now. I often wonder if the reason for that is that the conquest of Democracy by its enemies has proved to be possible, and that the weakness of Democracy has come to be understood.

This is, perhaps, the most appropriate place to refer to the unique influence which the Irish Party has had upon Labour. Had there been no Irish Party, the history of Labour politics would have been altogether different from what it is. And yet it is necessary that the Labour Party should understand the gulf which separates its tactics from those of the Irish, and not be misled by the many false analogies which it is usual to draw from the methods of that Party. The Irish Party acts upon the assumption that it is in an alien Parliament; it is there by the coercion of the constitution; it wants to force its demand upon a hostile people, and its demand is not to share power but to be let alone; its leaders come to us as Moses went to Pharaoh, asking that their people may be let go; the Party is no outgrowth from our own development, no new uprising from the breast of our own people;

it does not present to us, nor does it consider for itself, the problem of historical continuity, for it is in arms against history. But that is not a description of the Labour Party. It desires to gain possession of what the Irish Party desires to be rid of; it is not trying to get the country to let it go, but is endeavouring to persuade the country to give it confidence; it is not at war but at peace with the nation; what it would destroy, were it to injure Parliament, would not be an alien power but its own heritage. The Irish party ought to be strongest when it holds the balance of power between parties; the Labour Party is most likely to have a maximum influence when other parties are absolutely independent of it, because it is then free to vote and speak as it likes. When a government is kept in, or put out, by Labour votes the Labour Party is as hampered by its responsibilities as the other party is tormented by its weakness. The difference between the two parties cuts right down to the root of political method. The one wants a surgical operation, the other works for an organic transformation. The political friendship which exists between the two parties, and which I hope will always last, must not be carried to the extent of the young party modelling its methods upon those of the old.

The liability of Socialists to misunderstand the lessons which the Irish Party has to teach them, only emphasises the need of well-considered conclusions on government methods.

All sorts of enticing proposals will be made from time to time for Socialist support. Amendments in electoral laws, amendments in Parliamentary procedure, amendments in legislative methods—all apparently reasonable, all apparently just—will entice Socialists. And yet, they will probably not bear examination. They may be but will-o'-the-wisps leading into bogs those who foolishly follow. How necessary it is, therefore, that Socialists should examine their sociology for the purpose of discovering some political guidance so that they may be saved the effort of trying to abolish what cannot be abolished, and of changing forms under the belief that they are changing the spirit of things.

I have not attempted to write in this book of the transition to the Socialist State. No man knows its course or its events. All we can do is to try and show its ideological motives. Of one thing we may be certain, however, and it runs as an assumption right through this book. The man through whom Socialism is to come is not to be the economic man, the class-conscious man, the man toiling with the muck rake. He is to be the man of ideals, of the historical spirit, the man in whose intelligence religion and a sense of what is of good report will have a dominating influence, the generous and ungrudging co-operator with his fellows; and if the nation does not produce him, the nation will not be able to live without him. If the starvation of body and mind continues, if the work which

men must do for a living absorbs so much of their time and energy that they have no leisure to cultivate imagination of a rational kind or to discover so much of their real selves as to know self-respect, the nation will not be saved by changes in political machinery, or in ways of voting and passing laws.

A short time ago I published *Socialism and Society* in which I stated the Socialist position from a biological point of view. This study is in continuation of that. In it are applied to politics the same principles as were worked out in the previous volume. It is built up on the assumption that the evolution of life proceeds by a differentiation of function and an integration of these functions into a higher organic unity. It denies the uniformity of the mass of individuals in a State. Theories of checks, applied as mechanical weights and counter-weights, of majorities and minorities, of mathematical political calculations, are regarded as alien to Socialist politics, and as belonging to relationships that are not organic as social relationships are.

Although, I hope, it is apparent from the course of my argument, I desire to write it down categorically in this preface that one reason that has moved me to write this book is a desire to combat some of those influences inside the Socialist movement which are making for Anarchism rather than for Socialism, and for political ineptitude rather than for

administrative efficiency. I have no sympathy with those who would degrade the House of Commons by an exhibition of conduct within it like what marked the life of London vestries. I believe that Parliament should be distinguished and give opportunities for distinction. Hard as it is to know that time goes past with swift foot whilst good work almost defies doing, it is bad economy to make a year picturesque by the sacrifice of the substantial progress of a generation. This is not how Socialism is to come; this is how Socialism is to be retarded. I have written hoping to explain why this is so. Heaven is not taken by storm, but by honest thought which is not afraid to examine itself, and by honest action which is not averse to standing the test of time. Silently, in the night, when the watchers are looking elsewhere, the new spirit moulds life to itself. Only by looking back for a period of years can we mark the advance that has been made.

If it seems that heresy has invaded these Socialist pages, and fondly nursed phrases have been discarded or clothed in a new meaning, Socialists must not forget that every measure of success that comes to them requires of them a more minute examination of what they are to do next. The further we go, the more stoical must we become. Apocalyptic visions as an impetus to effort have to give place to the satisfying and blessed weariness which comes at the end of a day's work honestly done in a cause in which the worker's heart is set.

The crude expectation of the Second Coming was necessary for the founding of Christianity; the abandonment of that expectation for a faith in eternal purposes was necessary for the survival of the Church. "The mills of God grind slowly," but with those who have become reconciled to their ponderous movement, the satisfaction remains that the grindstones miss nothing.

One final word remains to be said, and perhaps it ought to be uttered so as to convey something like a regret. The penal servitude to which the constituents of a Member of Parliament do him the honour to condemn him, not only hardly leaves time necessary for the mechanical labour of writing a book, but absorbs most of his fresh energy of mind. And, when towards the end of Sessions, he has to submit with Christian patience to seeing the work of months ruthlessly swept away as by a flood, he is left with little consolation when he sees not only how swiftly Time runs, but how empty his hands are of gathered sheaves. The time must come when Parliamentary work will be done in a more business-like way, or no one who values Time will ever seek a place on the green benches of the House of Commons. This study claims to be nothing more than the thoughts which in sparse moments of leisure have arisen in the mind of one who has had to plod through barren sessions, who has had to face in a practical way the problems here discussed, and who, as a "House of Commons man," has thought of the actual problems of

government as they have presented themselves in the arena of political discussion, and has longed to see Parliament more effective and more honoured than it is. But behind this interest in passing events and in theoretical politics has been the conviction that Socialism will be led again and again into quagmires unless it harmonises its politics with its sociology, and unifies its theories of political and industrial organisation.

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD.

16th September, 1909.

SOCIALISM AND GOVERNMENT.

Chapter I.

THE STATE.

The State as we know it to-day, with national boundaries as its condition and national armies and navies as its most dramatic form of expression, is probably doomed to disappear and, at some still distant date, the parliament of man may assemble to represent the federation of the world. Yea, even the idea of government based upon force and carried out by legal enactment may become foreign to the human mind when in some far remote generation the beatitudes have become the common rule of life and the moral ideas of the Prophets have been embodied in the ordinary habits of the people. But these visions of the New Jerusalem only come to us

when we are "in the Spirit." Our heritage is Patmos—its spite, its politics, its problems. As yet, humanity is broken into fragments —colours, civilisations, races, nations. Its future perfections must grow from its present imperfections, and the task of the social reformer who works for permanent results is to begin improving with the material which he has at hand. Ideals are only valuable when they are used for the practical purpose of regenerating the existing realities.

The politics of Socialism must, therefore, be the politics of the world of to-day. Society is not yet a coherent whole. It is a disorganised mass of competing interests and warring personalities that have to be checked, ordered, and kept in control by civil law and coercion which, if wisely planned, must co-operate with and strengthen social custom and habit and moral sentiment. The whole body of coercive forces, legal and moral, must be in harmony, else the result will be confusion. The civil State cannot do injustice with impunity, any more than the individual can do wrong without punishment. Those who say that perfect social relationships can be brought about only when the heart

of man is changed, are just as far wrong as those who say that all we need do is to pass good laws and good conduct will follow. Both extremes are mere abstractions which do not exist in fact. The moral law requires the support of the civil law; the civil law requires the sanction of the moral law. We may admire the character of the man who believes that all would be well if we once moralised commerce, more than we admire that of him who says that self-interest is the best guide in human action, but both are ineffective as progressive agents. The individual and his social medium, what he does desire and what he ought to desire, must be harmonised. That is why the theory and practice of Socialism must include political action, and must assume the existence of the civil State.

I.

We must define what we mean by the State. It is not the Government, it is not Parliament, and it is not the official hierarchy of Whitehall; and, on the other hand, it is not Society. It is the organised political personality of a sovereign people

—the organisation of a community for making its common will effectual by political methods. Parliament only expresses this will as an executive committee expresses the will of an association; Whitehall is only an instrument for giving effect to the decrees of the State; political parties organise and persuade that will. In some countries, as in America and Australia, where the State is Federal, its authority is not exercised by any central power, but is distributed in accordance with the provisions of a formal constitution; in practically every country the central authority delegates to local municipal authorities certain powers of administration which tend to become so ample as to be almost legislative in their character; the modern municipality is politically equivalent to a State in that type of federation which delegates specified minor legislative powers to the constituent States. Society, on the other hand, is the total relationship of individuals in all their activities and combinations, and embraces such organisations as the family, which is not included in the State though receiving recognition from the State.

Thus, when the Socialist speaks of the

State or of State-control, he implies the community organised politically and acting not merely through a central authority, but through municipal authority, or, indeed, through the authority of any governing body created by the sovereign power to carry out the sovereign will. But this definition needs to be supplemented. This organisation of the community is not merely a collection of separate individuals which is brought together for a specific purpose and then dissolved. It is not a meeting. It is a form of collective activity which like other forms of human co-operation—the family, the Church—has a history, an evolution, a habit, an end—that is, an idea. Religion, national experience, economic and industrial evolution, have given to the State a personality which impinges upon the individual will and modifies its direction and motives. It meets the will of the individual with a force of its own. An individual living in Society does not move in a vacuum. It is, therefore, a mistake to assume that the State is only what the individuals in it have made it. The past has also made it. Nor has it been created by human voluntary agency. It is a condition of the

action of will when more than one individual live together. The evolution of the human body determines the functioning of the cells in that body; the evolution of the State of which he is a part influences the activity of the individual. The evolution of either the individual or the State is, in reality, the evolution of both together.

Hence, the State organisation should be regarded as being of an organic type; but, be that view accurate or inaccurate, certain it is that the discussion on the relation between the individual and the State, between liberty and government, which has been carried on by generation after generation of political philosophers, has been largely about appearances and words only. The supposedly happy and free individual doing as he likes, living how he likes, owning what he likes, never existed —never can exist except in backwoods and on the fringe of civilisation. The notion that liberty is the opportunity to be and do these things, except in so far as these anarchist enjoyments curtail the similar anarchist enjoyments of other people, never met the facts of life—particularly modern life. The human mind

can attain its full strength and power only in a community moved by a common mind which, on the one hand, works through that community acting as an organised unity, and on the other, through the minds of individuals consciously seeking their own development. The problem of liberty which asks for a solution to-day is how the individual can be surrounded by those social coercions and no others, which express the restraints upon action which an individual social will would of itself impose upon itself, and how these coercions can be systematised into a complete scheme of social activity. Or, using Rousseau's language, we may consider the problem of liberty to be, at any rate in part, how the State can force the individual to be free.

It is, therefore, an inadequate view of the State that it should only remove hindrances to the higher life. This is only one aspect of the State's moral utility. It must also provide steps by which to ascend to the higher life, and also nourish motives for using the steps. The State is both coercive and co-operative. Liberty in the State presents precisely the same difficulties as liberty in the family. How, in a community, are we to keep the embrace of

social order from becoming the restraint of the jailer? In answering we may assume that the interdependence of the individual and the community, which surely must now be an axiom in all profitable discussion of political sociology, has made futile and barren any arguments based on such ideas as that embodied in the formula: the Man *versus* the State. Law, social coercion, public opinion, expressing the experience of Society and the individual up-to-date and so preserving the continuity of Society, and yet so elastic as to allow that play for the individual and social reason which is necessary if there is to be progress, provide those conditions of life under which the real will of individuals is separated from their whims, or their temporary will, or their destructive self. I regard Society as an organism ossified in some of its parts but exceedingly mobile in others, conserving the past in its habits and institutions and yet responsive to the creative forces which are preparing the future; and I regard the individual will as a personal inward power directed like a compass needle by the magnetic pole of the social will, but constantly deflected and diverted by crossing currents of shortsighted

self-interest and ignorance in its work of welcoming a greater liberty and a fuller perfection. Confusion between the real will and the expressed will arises when the social or moral self is temporarily silenced, but the final court of appeal is always the real personality in the background.

This difference which exists between the real will and the expressed will of the individual is of the greatest importance in politics. It is the explanation of much apparent inconsistency between democratic theory and practice. To discover it is the task of the statesman who knows how far expressed desire is not real desire, who understands how he is to speak for what is in the heart but not on the lips of the people, and who, without mandates, and even against mandates, does what the people really want. Some recent controversies within the Socialist movement illustrate this. For instance, some of us have been decrying party government whilst busy creating a new party with a written constitution. On the surface, this appears to be absurdly contradictory, but whoever goes behind verbal expressions and discovers the reality they convey, finds no contradiction at all. The real will is not

that which is expressed in one mood or moment, but that co-ordinated with other expressions of the will and also with the social will; and it is upon this real will that liberty is based.

A further consideration regarding the relation of the State to the individual should be noted at this point as it supports the view that that relation must be active and positive and not merely passive and negative. The State guards the individual, not as something which is an end in himself, for that is but indirectly the concern of the State. Man as an end in himself is directly the subject of moral law and custodianship. He is the concern of the political personality of the community only because the perfect individual is a necessary element in the perfect humanity which is the final achievement of Society, and to serve which is therefore the function of the State. The State regards the individual as the inheritor of the past experience of humanity, as the user of its acquired gains, and as the worker through whom human perfection is to come. In the eyes of the State, the individual is not an end in himself, but the means to "that

far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves." Or, this thought may be translated into this form: The State does not concern itself primarily with man as a possessor of rights, but with man as the doer of duties. A right is the opportunity of fulfilling a duty, and it should be recognised only in so far as it is necessary to the performance of duty. Hence, the State should never recognise the existence of a "right"—say to get drunk—if it knows that that "right" disables its possessor from fulfilling his duties. Nor should the State grant the "right" to the franchise unless by doing so it is promoting its own ends. Thus, a right is not something inherent in manhood, but in manhood under circumstances; and so, as man approaches the fulness of liberty which he can enjoy only when he is perfect, his rights become more ample. He is no longer guided by the hand of coercion; his guidance is from within. Hence, in such a remote time, the State does tend to something like nirvana when by the perfecting of its life it ceases to exist. But until that time comes, the State regards the man as a carrier of human life between the Past and the Future, and assigns to him the

work of realising the Future from the Past. It shows him his path.

From this arise two departments of State duty. The first is to create and guard high standards of individual life; the second is to protect the weak. From the first, issue such laws as those which regulate factory and housing conditions, and in it we also find justification for an extensive interference with low-priced labour and the competition between sweated and non-sweated goods, the payment of standard wages by the State as consumer, and such like.* This principle also justifies special industrial legislation affecting women, although this legislation must be defended on other grounds as well. It is the function of the State to maintain Society, and

* There is no theoretic objection to a tariff imposing penalties upon goods made abroad under conditions which are not tolerated at home. The real objection to this is the practical one, that such a tariff could never be confined to the goods in question and that its indirect and resultant evil effects would greatly counterbalance its good effects. If such a tariff were ever to become effective, it must be preceded by an international agreement under which every State undertakes to label all products made below a certain standard of industrial condition.

as the family is essential to Society, it is the duty of the State to prevent the destruction of the family. If, for instance, it could be shown that excessive infant mortality is caused by married women working in factories—and the evidence does not establish this quite clearly—the State ought to prohibit such work. It would be no reply to say that married women's wages were necessary to make the family income adequate. That would only be an indictment against the present industrial system on the ground that it required for its existence an excessive infant mortality, and hence that it is self-destructive. So also, if the calling of barmaids is of the nature of a dangerous industry—and the proof of this is overwhelming—the State ought to prohibit it. The contention that such legislation ought not to be undertaken until women are enfranchised has no validity. Whether the method of electing its Parliament be good or bad, the duty of the State to protect Society is imperative. It must act upon evidence and take upon itself responsibility for its action. This is at once seen when we state the form of the question that would be put to the enfranchised women.

It would be: "Are you to allow women to work in such and such dangerous trades?" If they say, "Yes," their decision is contrary to Society's existence. It is not to decide such things in their own seeming interests that women are to be admitted to citizenship. Women have no "rights" enabling them to lower the standard of social life, or to aid the self-destructive tendencies of Society.

Eugenics, therefore, is a matter of State concern—not the whole field of Eugenics, but part of the field. For here we are on the border-line of the utility of State action. When considering questions relating to the quality of the population, we deal with theoretical State rights which, even if taken for granted, cannot be put into operation because the practical difficulties in the way are insuperable.* But it is the duty of the State, and well within its practical action, to create a system of individual training directed to secure such personal tastes regarding beauty and strength as to be a guarantee that the race is being propagated by healthy and comely men and women.

* The best reply to Sir Francis Galton and the new Eugenic School is found in *Mankind in the Making*, by H. G. Wells.

Natural selection by death has been set aside, but the State can set sexual selection in operation again by an education in good taste.

But another department of Eugenics offers much less difficulty than that of the mating of the sexes which the State can only influence indirectly. The principle I have been laying down demands separate codes of legislation, especially industrial legislation, for men, women, and children, on the ground of the physiological differences of sex and age. Nor is that the full extent to which we are committed. For if, say, economic circumstances hamper the individual in any respect in which the State is interested in his liberty, these circumstances, *primâ facie*, are subjects of State concern.* We have such cases presented to us every day. Competitive interests play upon each other and drive each other to the wall. One or more persons or classes may benefit as a result, but there is

* How far, as regards any specific matter, this principle can apply is a question in practicality. Principles do not work because they are logically faultless. To lay them down, however, is of the greatest utility because the establishment of the *ought* generally brings the establishment of the expedient in its train.

no judge of a higher or more comprehensive good to decide whether the benefit is for the whole or for the part only, whether on the balance it is good or is bad. One individual sacrifices another individual to his own ends. He is better equipped with muscles, or weapons, or economic advantage, or luck, but there is no arbiter to say whether the contest is ending in greater good or not. One class preys upon another class. Its opportunities for doing so have come during the course of historical evolution. They are in the form of property, perhaps. But no over-man, surveying the whole, tells whether the result is beneficial or otherwise. Then, again, the workman is not merely the servant of, but the co-operator with, capital. He has an interest in the proper management of the factory in which he works, almost as great as that of the person who owns it. But how can this fact influence industry? Under private ownership obviously it cannot. It is a moral consideration which cannot be fitted into the scheme of present-day industry. Or, we may urge this with another set of circumstances in mind. A State, where law is administered with the greatest impartiality, may come far short of

equity, because the conditions under which one class lives as compared with another are so unequal as to make the operation of legalism inequitable.

The State, representing the political personality of the whole, is the only possible judge of these things. It thinks and feels for the whole. The life of the whole is its life. It, therefore, is the best assessor of the result of individual action upon the whole and upon other individuals. And, when it does act, it ought not to do so as a judge adjudicating merit or demerit after the event; it ought to organise the circumstances so as to prevent the evils. The collective will and interest ought to control social conditions so that they contribute to the well-being and not to the exploitation of the whole. Thus we reach the bedrock upon which the foundations of Socialism rest.

The responsibility to cherish the weak arises from a different circumstance. Involved in the duty to protect the social individual and secure him freedom are certain considerations relating to the humane or spiritual qualities of individuality. For instance, the repulsion which

the social individual feels on seeing fellow beings left in neglect when their condition is not attributable to actions for which they can reasonably be held responsible, calls for State action. Thus, it is as the watchful helpmate of a perfecting humanity that the State cares for the orphan, the halt, the maim, the blind, the insane; that it has passed laws protecting children; that it pays pensions to the aged; that it concerns itself with the economically weak, like the unemployed.

But a problem of no little moment arises here. The sentiments of the individual may come into conflict with the existence of Society, and the State protection of the weak may lead to the perpetuation of their weakness—to the undoing of Society by inherited disease. If the insane breed insanity, the epileptic epilepsy, the idiot idiocy, does not the protection afforded to them by the State defeat the ends of the State? Further, if the care taken of the weak means that the blood of the strong is to be diluted, does not that lower social vitality and menace the progress of the race? The conclusion cannot be denied. This opens up the whole field of social pathology to which much more attention must

be given by legislators and social reformers than has hitherto been the case. For my present purpose, however, I need give this subject but general and passing reference.

The greatest care must undoubtedly be taken by the State to prevent weaklings handing down weakness as a patrimony to children and Society. But the difficulty can not be overcome by the treatment of individual cases. Our present social state, with its feverish anxieties, with the excessive strain it puts upon nerves and the vast amount of under-nourishment of the body which it entails by its poverty, is responsible for much of the weakness for which the State is expected to make provision. Reason has forbidden the operation of the cruder and crueller selective processes of nature (the red tooth and claw processes), but reason has not yet been allowed to produce the fittest by mutual co-operation and an elimination of those disabilities like poverty which, though allowed to damage up to a certain point, are not allowed to kill and destroy outright. This is but another avenue of thought leading direct to Socialism. Social co-operation expressing itself in all social activities—political, industrial, economic—is necessary to

eliminate the sources of social disease which, under the present system, is ceaselessly poisoning the race and lowering its physical and intellectual potentiality, and which actually makes it dangerous, as I have pointed out, for the State to exercise those protective functions imposed upon it by the human heart. Whilst the individualist and the reformer offer changed systems of Poor Law administration, segregation of the unfit, the lethal chamber, and similar things as preventives, the Socialist regards race deterioration as a social phenomenon, the result of a general ill-health, an organic disease undermining the system. At the present moment we are in a quandary. We must protect the weak because our sentiments will not allow us to sacrifice them. If we simply protect them we run the risk of their deteriorating the stock. If we try to eliminate them we must face such problems as that of poverty in all its ramifications. The organisation of mutual aid—Socialism—is thus growing in Society in exactly the same natural way as the Feudal system grew out of certain mediæval conditions and as Liberal individualism grew out of the organisation of the world market.

II.

One naturally turns from considering the duties of the State to examining how it acts. Much has been said during the Socialist propaganda of the failure of the legislature to fulfil its functions. But it is well to remember that the actions of legislatures can but express the will of the community—not of a class, or of a majority, or a minority, or a party, but of the community.* Government rests on public opinion when public opinion has command of sufficient force to control the State; and the distinctive feature of a Democracy is that it places that requisite force in the hands of the people, and changes the mode in which it expresses itself from a revolutionary display to a governing majority. Those who cannot control ballot boxes in a Democracy, cannot command enough force of any kind to make laws.† This is particularly true in countries like Great Britain

* This receives ampler consideration in Chap. III., Vol. I., and, more particularly, at pp. 79 *et pass.*, where it is shown that minorities may initiate, but such minorities to be successful must, in reality, be voicing the will of majorities even when majorities are not fully aware of the fact.

† Speaking more accurately, the public opinion which acquiesces is the public opinion which has

where no written constitution hampers the carrying out of public opinion. Where there is no written constitution, no codification of the law, no violent projects of change, no dangers like the overthrowing of dynasties (as in Spain) or forms of government (as in France), public opinion reaches a maximum of influence. The fact that democratic government rests upon public opinion, and that public opinion is not party or coterie opinion, cannot be too strongly emphasised. We might even go further and say with Hume that whatever may be the form of government, "it is on opinion only that government is founded," and this maxim may extend to the "most despotic and most military governments, as well as the most free and

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the power—the command of the necessary force, armed or political—to make its disagreement effective. One State is sometimes annexed by another, as we annexed the Transvaal, and, in that case, force alone makes the united State. But even under such circumstances, as the present position of the Transvaal illustrates, the bond of public opinion and consent tends to take the place of the other. An equally striking example of the same thing is found in Quebec. The assimilation of nationalities by another nationality—of which the United States affords a wonderful instance—is a fascinating study but one which has hardly received the attention which it deserves.

most popular."* This is too unqualified because the public opinion which rules is that which has force behind it. But still the law of government is clear. Kings must persuade the people that they have a Divine Right to rule, or must grant Parliaments to rule for them; a governing class must either crush its political subordinates into a state of passivity (in which case it still rules by consent, however sullenly or stupidly it may be given) or persuade them that it, for some reason or other, must be allowed to retain its political privileges. There may be times when a great personality, like Frederick the Great, is imposing his own will upon his people, and is pursuing a course of action about which they are not being consulted. Here, however, the people give a passive consent. The policy being pursued is either not actually contrary to their wishes, or it is the action of an authority which they accept, an action which becomes a detail in a general system of government in which they acquiesce. The appeal to force, always in the background, is rarely in the front of the stage when nations have once settled down.

* Essay on *The First Principles of Government.*

This public opinion upon which all government rests becomes more and more directly responsible for the acts of government The acquiescing classes gain economic power by amassing wealth through trade, or political power by having to be appealed to to defend the State during war, or to take the side of one or other of the conflicting classes during times of internal conflict between King, Church, or aristocracy, and so are able to exact the price of their utility in the coin of political freedom. The history of political liberty is the story of how communities pass from a state under which they gave a general assent to a system of government without having any responsibility for the policy of the sovereign authority, to that state under which public opinion not only accepts the general system but works it, and so becomes the active sovereign authority. The public opinion of the subject becomes the public opinion of the citizen. Thus the State becomes democratic. Devices are adopted—like the financial powers of the British House of Commons—by which all authorities in the State, which are nominally independent of public opinion, are limited in their actual powers. The

opinion which restrained rulers at first becomes the opinion which initiates legislation. This is essential. The people must take part in the initiation of policy and not merely acquiesce in its results. We shall see later on how this power can be used in a modern State, but let it suffice for the present to note that its exercise is the meaning of Democracy.

When writing of the democratic State, I have no picture in my mind of a featureless and undifferentiated mass of people. The individualist philosophers of whom Benthan was the chief, and who are represented to-day by the advocates of a Referendum and Initiative, regarded the State as being composed of units all functioning equally. The consistent Socialist can hardly take that view. To him the State is composed of different political organs performing different functions. There are the sensory centres and the volition centres, the centres which feel and the centres which think, and in the effective State, this difference of function is allowed for. The expressions sovereign and subject, though they carry with them reminiscences of bygone political

struggles, and from those struggles have acquired an offensive taint, nevertheless represent a real difference which must always exist in a State. When sovereign and subject were personal relationships, they implied personal servitude, and the history of Democracy is, for those periods, the record of personal political emancipation. This historical fact has now become a source of political error. The differentiation in a democracy of sovereign and subject is one of function not of personality. It is no longer a difference of social status, and certainly not a difference which is inherited by birth. It is a difference between the Whole and Each. Those individuals composing the governing functions which voice and assert the will of the whole, exercise the control of sovereign authorities over the Each. What happens is that the sovereignty of the whole can become effective only when it is exercised by a differentiated function in Society. That function used to be performed exclusively by families, "the priests and the Levites," now it is performed by the representatives of public opinion for the time being. This is all that has happened as the result of the

historical struggle between sovereign and subject. Sovereignty, then, ought to be no more objectionable in idea to Democracy than the differentiation of foremen from ordinary workers—indeed, not perhaps so much.

There is a sovereign authority in America just as in England, in France as in Germany; and a sovereign authority always implies a subject relationship. Nominally, the King is our sovereign; in reality it is the electorate acting through the House of Commons, but curbed and limited by the Peers sitting in the House of Lords and by the general working possibilities of the machine of government.* The King is constitutionally a subject to the system of governmental authority in which he has a place; the members of the House of Commons are each subjects, though collectively they hold the greater part of the sovereign authority.

The question arises: How are the various functions through which the Sovereignty is diffused to be created and kept in vital relationship with each other so as to preserve the organic unity of the

* *Cf.* Chapter IV., Vol. II., pp. 22-40.

State and the control of public opinion? To this, I shall offer an answer, but before passing on to do so certain further observations must be made regarding the personality of the State itself.

When the State has become democratic, it has not merely changed its organisation, but its nature. For democracy is not only a method of government, it is a spirit and purpose of government. The change in form indicates, as changes in form generally do, change in purpose. Democracy comes in fulness of time to carry on the life of the State to a further stage in its evolution. An absolute monarchy, or an aristocracy, may found and preserve a State; they may make it great in world politics; they may develop its arts and science; they may encourage its industries; they may establish justice within it; but they cannot give it liberty. Their good deeds are the good deeds of patrons. Their régime bears within itself the germs of a new order—the order of civil liberty maintained and protected by the free citizen.*

* I am thinking only of the West, where religion in some more or less abstract form has failed to impose a pseudo-divine order of government upon

And when the State reaches this stage, the final stage of its political evolution, the community is well advanced in industrial life, and politics and industry have become closely connected. Society in modern times includes a state of political liberty and of economic bondage. The workman who has become politically free is still beset with all the economic pains and disabilities of a wage-earner. Economic forces have been organised to such an extent that the economically independent individual has become a mere myth for credulous people to believe in. The individual has become a member of an economic class. He belongs to the class which owns the instruments and other means of production, and which organises markets and labour, or which owns nothing but the common endowment of humanity—strength—upon which education has super-imposed skill. If he belongs to the latter class he has a most precarious hold on life. Poverty is always at his door, uncertainty sits with him in his home. There is no regular demand for his labour; his

the people as is the case in the East. But even in the East, the divinity of kings is not impregnable against the awakening of peoples.

income, as a rule, is insufficient to enable him to make adequate provision for his family, for times of slack work, for old age. If he belongs to the other classes, he is not at all free from the endless uncertainties of the present economic state. Influences over which he has no control determine whether he is to continue in prosperity or fall into penury, and the very fact that his standard of life is higher lays him open to more woeful experiences when misfortune overtakes him. The mental strain, the financial risk, the sacrifice of every other interest which modern history imposes upon its "captains," as a condition of success, are being felt more and more keenly. The limited liability company takes the place of the old firm. The stress is so unpleasant and severe that the second and third generation of many of our commercial families are born tired, and have neither the grit nor the soul of the first. There is a steady tendency to increase the financial power in industry, as more and more people, shirking the responsibility of using their own possessions, hand them over to someone else who uses them as a hired servant. Thus, the official and impersonal use of capital has been

established already. Capital, indeed, becomes more effective in consequence of this concentration and organisation, but this increased effectiveness only makes the community more dependent upon the financier, and the operations of the industrial system become harder in consequence. The rush of the propertied classes to leave the system and become drawers of dividends from it, increases the struggle from which they desire to flee. Only in that class which owns certain essential things, like land, and which derives an income, not from profits, and not from sharing in proceeds which it has risked its possessions to make, but from tolls upon industry which it can impose because, if industry does not pay those tolls, it will not be allowed to operate at all—only this class lives in comparative security. When it complains the ground of its complaint is that it has attached so many non-productive labourers to itself to supply luxuries for it, that at times it cannot comfortably maintain them. Such is the anarchy which passes to-day for industrial "order." It is chaos; it is a living from hand to mouth; it is a mere speculation in luck.

These are the economic conditions which

beset the State at the point in its evolution when it becomes politically democratic.

Biological analogy will help us to understand the precise meaning of these conditions. Industry in its various departments of production, distribution and exchange, is the nutritive process of Society. The carpenter makes tables and receives boots by a process which is analagous to that by which starch becomes changed into sugars for the nutrition required by the human body. The producers supply the food of Society. It is exchanged, it is distributed, it is conducted into this channel and that so that the body politic may live, may grow, may progress. When the time is reached when separate national entities are fixed, and when, in consequence, the political struggle for existence, expressed through military organisation, has either disappeared or has become of secondary importance,* social nutrition becomes the chief concern of the established Society in exactly the same way as physiological

* Though of course until the peaceful settlement of national disputes is firmly established, national defence may at any moment become of primary importance.

nutrition is the first concern of the living body. No branch of sociological investigation is being pursued with more interest to-day than this. Mr. Charles Booth's and Mr. Rowntree's investigations, government inquiries into physical deterioration, social studies in insanity and suicide, political agitations regarding unemployment, the physical condition of school children, Old Age Pensions—all appearing to be haphazard, disconnected, *ad hoc* to everybody but the Socialist who sees in them the embodiment of a great epochal characteristic in social evolution—are contributions to the problem of social nutriment, and prove the inadequacy of the existing rudiments of a nutritive system in Society. This must lead inevitably to ideas and experiments which will establish the rationality and practicability of Socialism.

Indeed, Socialism could not be defined better than as that stage in social organisation when the State organises for Society an adequate nutritive system; and democratic government is the signal that that change is taking place. This is another reason why the State is essential in Socialism. The nutritive system must be

fixed in its relation to the whole body and not to a part of the body; it must be under the control of the complete organism through a nervous system of differentiated functions. The processes of converting labour and raw material into wealth, values into use-values, and of carrying on the complete operations of assimilation known as exchange, must be done by an organ representing the whole of the needs of the body politic. It is this conception of social organisation which clearly divides Socialism from schemes of philanthropy on the one hand, and from anarchism on the other.

Thus, one comes to the conclusion that the laws of Society's being impose upon it the necessity of preserving the State. The State performs a necessary function. It is part of social economy, and this throws a new light upon taxation. The State requires an income, and this need not, as the individualist economists maintained, be taken of necessity from individual incomes. It is earned just as much as a personal income is earned. Here again, the superior accuracy of the Socialist theory is manifest. In the levying of

taxes, the individualist was always in confusion. It was evident that in supplying a diplomatic corps for foreign negotiations, an army for defence, a judiciary for justice, a civil service for administration, the State was adding to national wealth and well-being. But when the cost of this had to be found, the individualist could discover no better justification for doing it than by taxing luxuries, and, latterly, large incomes. Taxation was imposed with an apology. The incomes from which it was taken were assumed to have been earned. It was the powerful State with the pistol saying to the weak citizen without arms, "Five per cent. of your purse or your life." The theory at its best was that a man's income indicated the measure of benefit he derived from the State. This, of course, is not the case. A man with an income of £100 per annum from Consols gets more direct benefit from the State than a man with £1,000 per annum derived from surgical skill; a man with an income of £500 per annum from ground rents receives more benefit from the State than a merchant who pockets ten times the sum as ordinary profits from a business. The source of income is even more important in a scientific system of

supplying a State's revenue than its amount.* From natural monopolies, like land; from politically created monopolies, like licenses to sell liquor; from profits on communal services, like the carrying of letters and the supply of gas and trams—in other words, from the State's own creations of value—the main bulk of the State's income should be derived. In this way, not only is the State's exchequer kept supplied, but the distribution of wealth amongst individuals is kept more equitable than when monopoly values are allowed, as at present, to be forged into instruments of exploitation by interested individuals. The State, therefore, must be regarded as preserving itself by using its own property, earned by giving

* It is sometimes argued that a graduation of the income tax is equivalent to a discrimination of the source of income, because socially created wealth must, of necessity, enter far more largely as a rule into huge incomes than into small ones. That may be the case roughly, but it does not affect my argument, because those who favour a graduated income tax as opposed to a system of taxation based upon the character of the source from which incomes are derived, do so merely for reasons of ease of collection. They, however, place themselves in an endless confusion when they try to justify themselves on principles of equity.

precisely the same kind of service as entitles an individual to own and use property.

III.

Let there be no confusion between the State and Society and between the State and other organs in Society. The State is but one of the organs of the community, all of which together form the organism Society. That a confusion between the organism and the organ and between one organ and another exists, could be proved by many examples all of which would show the evil results of the confusion. The one I shall choose is that of the relations between Church and State. The Church is an organisation of the community for moral and spiritual purposes. As such, it has a method and a subject matter of its own. Historically it has become confused with the State. It demands State recognition and State support on the ground that its success contributes to the fulfilment of the purpose of the State. Undoubtedly, it is the duty, as it is the interest, of the State to secure for the individual the privilege of freedom to worship and to maintain moral and spiritual

standards. But such is the nature of the moral and the spiritual life that so far from quickening it, the active interference of the State only stagnates it; and it is a remarkable circumstance that every revival of the activities of that life has been marked in some degree or other by departures—like our own High Church movement—from the formulæ and the customs which the State, in its patronage of religion, has had to insist upon as tests and indications of the thing that it has actually recognised. The spiritual freedom of the Church is incompatible with State patronage. Sections like the High Church, may claim spiritual and ritualist freedom, and because State patronage has become little more than a form, and exists only for the purpose of appointing to ecclesiastical offices* political supporters of the Parliamentary majority existing for the moment, they may assert their claims for a time. But they are clearly not entitled to this liberty so long as they remain within the

* The State recognition of religion in Scotland is even of less import, and consists in a representative of the King holding once a year at Holyrood a levee at which ministers attending the General Assembly of the Established Church are present.

State Church. The union between Church and State in the Middle Age was a logical outcome of the mind of the time when both appeared to be aspects of the divine presence, and both were expected to pay homage to the divine representative. But that mind could not survive the flight of years, and the connection is now only the survival of ceremony and of form which linger long after the life has departed.

But, in some respects, it is no mere form but a harmful influence. For instance, in the demand that religious instruction should be given in State schools, more particularly in the demand that the creeds of parents should there be taught to their children, we have the confusion between the function of Church and State producing its evils with magnificent vigour. The very expression, "religious instruction"—"religious," the contribution of the Church, "instruction," the contribution of the State—symbolises the irreligious stupidity of the attempt to unite the characteristic functions of the two organisations. Two sections have clear and just views on this subject: the Roman Catholic, who claims that his school ought to be an

ante-room of his Church, because his State ought to be controlled by his Church—that, in fact, the school should be an aspect of his Church, staffed by members of his Church, and full of the incense of his Church; and the advocate of secular education toned with moral teaching which alone can be given by a civil authority. The former view is incompatible with civil liberty. To compromise between it and the other is to secularise the spirit of religion. To impart "religious instruction" by State machinery is to offer religion without its spirit, to give the husk without the kernel, the chaff without the wheat. And who can measure the deadening influence upon a nation's spiritual life of generation after generation being subjected to a drill in the mere knowledge of facts which are supposed to be the special carriers of religious convictions, but which are imparted without that transforming enthusiasm, without that alchemic quality which is religion itself? This is really to deprive a nation of the chance it has of being quickened into a religious life. The spiritual delusion and darkness in which the people live who set value upon what is called "religious instruction" in our

State schools can only appal one with the conclusiveness of its evidence of how little we have yet gone on the way of the spiritual life.

It is true, however, that the different spheres of different organs in Society, like Church and State, have no well-defined boundaries. They merge into each other, and at points they both occupy the same ground. In education, for instance, both the Church and State have duties to perform, but their characteristic methods are different, and their characteristic ends are different, however closely related they may sometimes be. The explanation of this is given in what may appear to some to be an apparent contradiction in what I have written above: The State has humanity and not the individual as its end, and yet the State ought to improve the quality of individuals. There is no contradiction, however. The impulses to progress and the forces which are expressed in the laws of progress relate to a perfect humanity thinking and acting through the individual, and to an improving individual discovering in his own thought and actions a greater and greater measure of the human type to which he belongs. Human

progess presents itself as a growth in a perfection of type. It offers a study in the laws of the unstable equilibrium of an organism approximating to a more perfect condition. It therefore deals with the end and with the way to the end. On the health of the cell depends the virility of the organ; on the health of the organ depends in the long run the virility of the cell. This is the higher synthesis of individualism and collectivism to which Socialism has attained. But the synthesis cannot be gained by a confusion of the functions of different groups and different organs. Their unity lies not in their direct fusion, but in their co-operative contribution to the same end. So when we think of a union of Church and State, of spiritual and administrative functions, we should not think of a direct contact between the one or the other, but of their harmonious working in their superimposed unity—Society.

Chapter II.

ENFRANCHISEMENT.

The constitution of the legislature was the characteristic subject of Liberal and Radical activity. Who should vote? How should they vote? What ought to be the relation between Parliament and the electorate.

These were the political questions which Liberalism was created to answer, and which called for a philosophy of Liberalism; and this political philosophy and work of Liberalism has now become the patrimony of the Socialist.

Now, as I have already pointed out, the individualist basis of Liberal political philosophy requires to be replaced if the political principles of Socialism are to be brought into harmony with its social theories. Moreover, the time is at hand when the legislative machine must be overhauled in all its parts, and, in addition to that, the advance of Socialistic legislation is creating a demand on the part of its opponents for constitutional changes to

make legislation more difficult than it now is. The Socialist must, therefore, be prepared to discuss from his own point of view what reforms he desires, and must have some clear conception of his democratic principles, so that he may oppose changes which will retard the work which he has in hand and discourage time being wasted on others of no practical importance to the State. The importance of such a clear understanding is seen when one remembers that the machinery of government may retard or aid progress. Some Socialists, attracted by superficial appearances and by phrases which had no meaning but only embodied feeling, committed themselves in thoughtless moments to the Referendum—and the Referendum is now proposed by the Individualist opponents of Socialism as one of the most assured safeguards of existing interests. In their own internal administration, Socialists have occasionally shown an interesting reversion to the crudest eighteenth century notions of democratic control, and altogether there are many indications that the approach to Socialism for some time to come is to be accompanied by a conflict, not so much about the nature of legislation as about

the nature of the State. If this controversy is not to be unduly prolonged, as it well may, and if it is to be sucessfully overcome, Socialists must have some conception of how their principles of social organisation and their conception of the nature of Society can be applied to democratic sovereignty.

What, then, has Socialism to say on these matters? In its eyes, the State possesses a personality, and the problem presented is: How is this personality to become an accurate representation of the organic life of the community? It is not a problem of the representation of classes (even of the working classes), of interests, of education. All those considerations are minor to the Socialist. The Whig aimed at enlightenment, the Tory at stability in government. The Whig and the Tory, both, therefore, tried to devise property qualifications, educational tests, class representation. The Socialist believes in both enlightenment and stability, but sees that they cannot be attained by any special device of the constitution, but are conditions of a well-governed State. Good government is the condition of good government. Enlightenment and stability

are the results, not the antecedents of the excellent State. The Socialist, therefore, aims at something more comprehensive than either enlightenment or stability; he aims at that good government which is the result of an accurate representation of the State personality. We have, therefore, to consider what tests, if any, should be applied to applicants for citizenship in order to secure good government.

The particular stage of its evolution which a community has reached at any given time differs from preceding and succeeding stages, and is marked by the predominance of different influences in the State. No one with a historic sense will quarrel with history because a middle class period of dominance in the State followed Feudalism, or because complete Democracy was delayed for a period by a property qualification for the franchise; nor will any such person explain the exclusion of women from the Parliamentary register on the single assumption that the male creature is a tyrant over his female companion. On the other hand, such a person will never dream of urging that political arguments which were sound in the days of

the youth of Liberalism or the vigorous manhood of Whiggism, can survive the circumstances which gave them validity. The time comes when the welfare of the whole community, individually and collectively, can be promoted only by a State in which all, individually and collectively, are directly interested in creating the legislative and governing function. No class, however enlightened, can then represent the whole community; no interest, however vitally important, can then be entrusted with the governing function. The experience of all must then be represented by the State—rich and poor, propertied and propertyless, the possessor and the dispossessed. To make the social experience of all adults who have not for some good reason forfeited their privilege to exercise the franchise, available for the State, should be the political aim of Socialism. Theoretically, the experience which is not wanted is that of the parasitic classes and interests, of those anti-social persons living upon Society without rendering service to Society, of those who have done violence to the State and Society, who have offered and accepted bribes, or who have committed heinous crimes. But

in practice, this weeding of the tares from the wheat, this discriminating between what is social and what is not, is so intricate and delicate and depends upon so many circumstances which are in most instances not more definite than matters of judgment and even of conjecture, that, saving in cases like criminality, where the facts are clear, it had better not be attempted at all. All that we can do practically is to protect the State against the menace of these parasitical interests by laying down such conditions regarding the financial and other influences that may be used at elections, as will make it as difficult as possible for the electorate to give decisions which are not the voice of their own experience, their hopes and fears, their aspirations and terrors—decisions which are false owing to bribery or other forms of cajolery.

To secure this protection, a programme of measures making bribery and corruption in every form penal, making elections cheap so that the humblest of men may elect and be elected, and making the task of representation a service given to the community for which the community ought to pay, should be carried out. Such

a programme would include: all elections on one day, strict limitations upon the money to be spent both directly and indirectly in connection with candidatures, payment of all official expenses by the State—either national or municipal, the latter by preference—payment of Members of Parliament. The presence and conduct of Labour parties in Parliaments have shown conclusively that the wider the gates are thrown open, the more enlightened, stable and efficient will be the State. The assumption that a youth and early manhood spent at the bench or in a mine or factory, incapacitate a man from taking part in the legislative assembly of his country has been proved to be false; the patronising explanations given that the Labour Members have learned a great deal in Parliament are only forms of middle-class impertinence. These members have taught as well as learned. Their presence there has increased the fulness of the State's personality which must be the single aim and the final test of all electoral machinery.

This theory is in sharp contrast with that of the individualist Liberals who regarded Democracy as the realisation of

equality.* It is not the idea of equality which I see underlying the democratic franchise, but the recognition of the value to the State of the experience of the individual, or perhaps, to speak more accurately, of the section of the community to which an individual belongs. For it is not individuals but classes and descriptions of individuals that are admitted from time to time to the franchise.

If, then, we are to lay it down that this fulness of State personality is the aim of the political organisation of Democracy, can we increase the certainty of effecting this by any selective tests upon electors beyond those already mentioned? For, instance, should property be represented as well as personality? Is it an indication of any specially vital experience? If it were a law of nature that some conspicuous social or personal virtue was a necessary

* *Cf.* De Tocqueville: chapters in *Democracy in America* dealing with the relation between equality and free institutions. Godkin, *Problems of Modern Democracy*, p. 285: "Democracy is simply an experiment in the application of the principle of equality to the management of the common affairs of the community."

condition to the acquisition of property, the position of the Conservatives might be maintained with some success. But acquisition is carried on by all kinds of methods and from all kinds of motives. The ownership, say, of slum property, might well be considered as a reason for disfranchisement, whilst the existence of Park Lanes recruited from South African mining operators forbids us straight away from putting any special civic value upon property-owning. Property can be acquired by the exploitation of Society as well as by rendering service to Society, and it is impossible to differentiate in the property-owning classes between those whose property is a mark of social virtue and those who have become rich by sacrificing that virtue. Moreover, the conditions under which the stressful competition of industry is carried on and the race to get rich is run, are such as to throw more doubt than heretofore has been fair on the civic virtues indicated by the possession of this world's goods. Not only are they often acquired by methods which are simply dishonest, but the mind is cramped and the interests are narrowed in accumulating them owing to the sleepless vigilance and the neglect

of other interests required of our great profit-makers. Plutocracy has, in no age of the world's history, been credited with much social culture or civic virtue. In our own age, it has been indicted for having subverted the spirit of politics and for being responsible for what bribery and corruption prevails, for having lowered the tone of our press, and for having vulgarised Society.

Apart from all that, property has a special, if indirect influence over and above the mere voting strength of property-holders. Property has its followers; it commands its forces. It pays the piper and can call the tune to political parties. It controls the press. It has countless resources for making and unmaking public opinion. The man who has money to spend is, in spite of corrupt practices prohibitions and a democratic franchise, in a position of great political superiority compared with the man who has no money to throw about. Without a single special electoral facility, property will command political advantages, and it will always use them.

But the most fundamental objection to property being a test of citizenship has yet to be mentioned. Society becomes

more efficiently organised by the extension of communal property; individual liberty becomes effective only when social ownership in the necessary means of production protects the individual against the chaos which follows upon the private ownership of those social requirements; individual freedom to own property becomes possible only when it is conditioned by social ownership in those kinds of property which, if owned privately, produce poverty. During the generation of social disorganisation known as economic individualism, private interests grow up round every form of injustice, exploitation and deterioration. The widow's mite finds an investment in land monopoly, the worker's savings in slums. Wrong becomes woven into the social fabric, and the threads cannot be picked out without injuring the fabric. The pressure of competition and the moral demands which the individual is making with increasing persistence upon Society, are compelling us to consider means for undoing this economic wrong which has become so inextricably mixed up in our social life. To secure this, the Socialist does not advocate the abolition of private property, but the

limitation of the field upon which it may operate. Indeed, modern legislation all tends in that direction, from bills promoting municipal trams, to the Budget of 1909. If this readjustment of property be the line of further evolution, it is perfectly evident that the stability which a property qualification for the franchise gives to legislation is not the stability of life but the rigidity of death. A movement in the method of property-owning, in the spirit of property-owning, together with a changing idea of what is and is not expedient to hold as private property—for instance, private property in men, slaves—is of the essence of progress. Therefore, for the State to erect property-holding into a test of citizenship is as though a man decided to obey throughout life the habits of his youth, or as though in America, before the Civil War, the South had insisted that no man should be enfranchised who did not own slaves. It is an endowing of the transitory habits of Society with the supreme power to settle what social custom in the future is to be.

Of equally fundamental importance is the argument that every citizen has an interest in the efficiency, moral and political,

of his State, which far exceeds in importance and value the special interests of the propertied classes. A properly organised State requires to know the experience of the propertyless as well as of the propertied classes. The experience of the pauper who has never had an opportunity to acquire property owing to low wages, intermittent work, or other misfortune, is a political influence as valuable as that of the millionaire whose only worries have arisen owing to a superabundance of possessions. The evicted and landless cotter is far more likely to have a socially sound opinion on land tenure than the shooting tenant; the unemployed wage-earner assisted by a Distress Committee, is as qualified to express an opinion on the human results of the existing order as is the successful employer of labour. The failure of present-day Society, as adequately as its success, must be represented in the personality of the State. Both the victimised and the blessed must sit on the jury.

The only reflection which is troublesome from my point of view is how to guard against the demoralisation of the Esau in Society who is willing any day to sell his birthright for a mess of pottage. But, in

order to gain a properly focussed view of the danger of our Esaus, we must survey the community of the politically demoralised throughout its whole extent. The price of the poor may be a contemptible mess of pottage, but the evil is not that the price is insignificant, but that there is a price at all. The rich man also has his price. There is a demoralisation which comes from parasitism and from dependence upon existing evils—for instance, income from the consumption of alcohol and from other things which yield a harvest of social degradation—as well as from poverty. The rich man's hangers-on are as open to illegitimate influences as the tramp on the road, or the "soaker" who lives in public bars. There is as much political incapacity, as much mental atrophy, as much moral obliquity, amongst the well-to-do in Britain to-day as amongst the poor. The mistake made is to confuse dress, accent, and bankers' balances with wisdom and education. This demoralisation is not something that can be sifted out of political influences as chaff is sifted from wheat, because the evil is not a mixture of chaff and wheat, but a poor quality of wheat. It is an organic weakness of the

body politic eradicable only by a tonic such as an education which trains citizens to take broad social views and to act with common benefits as their main purpose, will administer. If the diseased parts could be separated, I would favour the separation, but no test yet suggested would do it. The property test would succeed least of all, for it would not only retain within the body politic some of the very worst forms of the disease, but it would add to their influence.

Akin to the argument for the disfranchisement of the propertyless is the claim that taxation and representation should go together. The theory underlying this is not exactly that property alone should exercise the franchise, but that those contributing to State income should determine State expenditure. Although this test for the franchise still figures occasionally on platforms, it has, in practice, ceased to be applied. The life of the State needs much more service than that of financial contributions, and if the test were a good one, the taxpayer should have influence—that is, votes—in proportion to his payments. Moreover, the question arises: How are

payments made? Obviously, indirect taxation must be taken into account as well as direct taxation. Besides, the even more fundamental question has to be answered: Who really do provide the taxes? The wage-earner bears them just as much as the profit-owner. Thus, in attempting to establish this test on an equitable basis, we find ourselves entangled in a maze of elusive considerations. In practice, the test of taxation becomes a test of property. The dictum: "No taxation without representation" was, therefore, only a political cry of temporary value which justified the claim of the middle classes, the trading and manufacturing classes, that they were entitled to the vote. It represented the special service rendered by the middle class to the State. On the one hand, it showed their title to rank with the privileged classes, whilst, on the other, it distinguished them from the common people, the democracy. Similarly when the middle class taxpayers of the American colonies felt aggrieved with the stupidity of our King and his Ministers, that was the formula used to rouse the colonists to resistance and confound the ruling powers of the mother country.

To-day it is heard in the agitation for female suffrage, and it is unanswerable in so far as it is intended that women who pay taxes should alone be enfranchised; but it satisfies none of the considerations which ought now to be taken into account in connection with the granting of full citizenship to women or to anyone else. It is not a democratic principle at all. It is a political motto of a middle class agitation.

Here a further proposal suggests itself. Can we not devise some educational test which might have the effect of reducing the influence of the demoralised sections of the electorate? Might we not give the holders of certain educational degrees two votes and so extend the principle of the separate representation of Universities? Or, might we not impose some educational qualification upon applicants for the franchise in the same way as immigrants to the United States are tested?

Once more the practical difficulties first of all press themselves upon us. What are we to test? Obviously, not merely knowledge, for the wayside loafer would not be weeded out, and there is much

knowledge inside prison gates. If it is anything, it must be character, judgment, and intelligence. But these are just the qualities which elude school book tests such as this would have to be. The ranks of University representatives consist of an almost unbroken line of men whose academic and professional distinction seems to have prevented them from attaining to Parliamentary influence and outstanding political eminence. When a University finds itself in possession of a representative of unusual mental vigour and of independent judgment, it generally proceeds to change him. The almost uniform lack of political enlightenment which University representatives have shown, so far from recommending an extension of such representation, has brought it into disrepute. And the important point to note is that it is not the representatives themselves who are to blame, because in their own spheres they often have been men of great distinction. The mistake lies in the idea of such representation. A successful career at a University is occasionally the indication that a vast darkness has settled down upon a man's mind on all matters of human concern and

knowledge, and that as a citizen his value is of a somewhat low grade.

When we consider with detailed care what the qualities of good citizenship really are, we find that tests like those of University distinctions are utterly meaningless, because the experience of the University career, whilst having a value, has no predominating or certain value in good government. Civic capacity, and college and examination capacity, are very far from being one and the same thing. Dealing with only one point of difference, it must be obvious to everyone that educational tests are not tests of an educated opinion so much as of a class distinction which can pay high fees, and an intellectual mechanism which is no indication of anything beyond the fact that at the time of examination it could answer certain questions.

If the democratisation of the Universities were to be found to remove this objection as I have stated it, the validity of an educational test for the franchise would not even then be established. Keeping in mind the fact that the function of the electorate is to secure a complete representation of experience in the State, illiteracy

is no greater a disqualification than other-worldliness, a bookish seclusion of habit, or any other social or intellectual defect which cuts a man off from an intimate knowledge of mundane affairs. Inability to write his name is, indeed, not nearly so fatal to a man's practical judgment on worldly matters as some of those defects in education which darken his wisdom and narrow his outlook. In fact, on the contrary, it might be argued that a superficial education leading to the wide consumption of worthless literature from newspapers to novels has lowered the political efficiency of the community, and has brought about a quality of public opinion inferior to what existed when book-learning was less common than it now is.

But it is really profitless to spend time in pursuing further considerations of this proposal. It is intelligence that is wanted in the electorate, not knowledge; and our educational authorities have hardly yet recognised the difference between the two. For instance, a would-be elector may be prepared to pass an examination which would entitle him to rank high amongst University graduates, but if he believes that Socialism is confiscation, or that it is

to destroy the family, or that the Peace Party is anti-patriotic, an adequate test of political intelligence would instantly "pluck" him and send him back to his study as being far too ignorant to be entrusted with the power to vote for a Parliamentary representative.

We search in vain for mechanical tests to separate the good from the bad citizen. Those that are available, like lunacy and criminality, are insignificant. To them we must add the test of adult years upon the assumption that, until such a period of life has been reached, the experience of the individual is that of the pupil whose mind is not sufficiently matured to enable him to give a valuable decision. His activities up to then are of the nature of exercises in preparation for the responsibilities which await him.* Aliens must also be excluded on the ground that they owe no allegiance to the State, and are dwelling in the community only as

* The age of 21 has been taken as a convenient time for the recognition of manhood, but this seems to me to be a little too high in view of the education now given to our youth, and the industrial responsibilities placed upon most of them before that time.

sojourners and guests. But beyond an application of such simple and obvious reasons for exclusion, it is not safe and not wise to go. The only test is life—experience; the only safeguard is training in the spirit of good citizenship, in social intelligence, in moral sensibilities. The State must bid all come to its aid; it can protect itself only by seeing that the all are placed in circumstances under which the rational life is possible, and the good life easy. And, we must never forget that ignorance and the anti-social spirit, disfranchised and politically unrecognised, is as great a menace to the State as if it had access to the ballot box. The general public opinion, the general national ideals, the general mental strenuousness and moral aspiration, in the long run, rule. They may be hampered and confused by the monopoly of political power by a class, but they rule in the end as was shown by the reform struggles of the first half-dozen decades of last century. Far better place directly upon them the responsibilities which they, in reality, do bear, and throw them open to the educational and sobering effects of full citizenship.

But there is still the question of how far sex should be a disqualification. I think the argument that because women cannot assist the State in the last resort when it is called upon to defend itself, would, provided it be true, be fatal to the claim of women were the State still in its militarist stage when its chief concern is self-defence by force of arms, and when the industrial workman is also disfranchised.

In the first place, however, it is not quite so certain that, even were we still in that stage, women would not have to bear a responsibility for defence equally important with men. During our war against the South African Republics, the part which the Dutch women played in encouraging the men to fight was entitled to rank side by side with the actual work of the soldiers in the field. Women have, indeed, always played a specially important part in national and racial defence. When, amongst primitive peoples, a tribe was conquered, it sometimes withdrew to an out-of-the-way place until its male population was sufficiently restored to enable it to try its fortunes again on the war-path.*

* This was the case with the Maoris, and their

During this recuperative period, the influence of the mother was all-important. In her heart were concentrated the hatred and the purpose of her tribe; sexual selection, which was in her keeping, was in reality a selection for military ends; the more completely her will was an expression of the tribal will to struggle for existence, the more successful was that tribal struggle.

We have the same thing illustrated in those racial sentiments which burst out into political policy wherever different races live side by side. In India, it is the women who deal most harshly with those who mate with the other race. In America the wrath of women generally fans the passion which leads to the lynching of blacks in the Southern States. In Natal, women are most bitter against the native. In Australia, the determination of the white race to remain pure—the doctrine of the White Australia—finds no

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system of tribal land tenure was modified in recognition of this. A conquered tribe always retained a kind of lien upon the lands taken from it, the possession of its conquerors not becoming quite absolute, because they might be challenged at any moment by an army of the original holders.

more passionate advocates than the women, and the fear of Japanese retaliation makes the women electors of Australia as willing as the men to support compulsory military service. The women of a tribe or nation have never lacked tribal or national instincts; they have never failed to rouse the passions of the warriors; under stress of tribal or national strife, sexual selection has given preference to the male eager to win fame in battle. This is just as true in human as in animal society. The female co-operates with the male in securing the survival of the combative elements in the race.

But although such strenuous action may always be a possibility in the background of modern communities, it cannot be regarded as the characteristic concern of their normal life. To secure the "good life" for which the State now exists, a rational State policy is required, and, as I have argued, a State reflecting the experience of all is necessary for this. If, therefore, there is a case for the enfranchisement of women, it should consist in a proof that women's experience is different from men's. That she is down-trodden, that she pays rates, that she will specially

help one party against another, that she has to obey laws which she has no direct voice in making, may be true or not. In so far as it is true, it is equally true of other sections of the community, and does not touch the special question of sex disqualification. Indeed, all these things may be true and yet not entitle women to vote. The insulting classification of women with children and lunatics, might, politically, be justified by the facts. In that case we should be sorry for her, but we should not aid her enfranchisement.

Is there any reason why the experience of women should be dangerous to the State? Is there any reason why it is now necessary to the State? Her characteristic experience is derived from the home, and it has been argued that she would bring into the State notions of family government and ethics which would destroy the existing relationships between the State and the individual. The greatest of modern individualists urged this objection. If it were sound in itself, it would rather favour her enfranchisement so far as Socialist theory is concerned. For, just as the family was founded as a unity of government, as an economic community

protecting and nurturing its members, and as a little organisation of mutual aid based on the fact that the moral peace of the individual lies in working with others for a common end, so in these days of rapid transit and vast areas over which industrial exchange is carried on, of concentrated capital and intricate industrial organisation, the State must assume over its own wide area, if the individual citizen is to flourish, some of the protective responsibilities of a family. The evolution of industry has so widened the area of the relationship of individuals—the people with whom they work, the markets where their labour finds a demand—that family care no longer covers, as it once did, the activities of its members, and the ethics of the family must, therefore, guide the State if the individual is to receive the same benefit from mutual aid as he has done heretofore.* The purpose of the

*As it is a favourite pastime of some anti-Socialist critics to wrench sentences from their context and so mislead people as to the intentions of Socialists, I perhaps ought to say categorically, that this view of State responsibility in no way involves the conclusion that the family organisation ceased to be important when the factory system was established. The economic

community becomes more and more charged with human meaning. In it, and through it, the individual comes closer and closer to other individuals. As Society approaches an organic completeness of co-ordination and co-operation of function the dependence of the individual upon it for his happiness and prosperity becomes more clearly felt, and the ethical and economic relationship which has made the family association tender, begins to characterise Society itself. Every year the volume of legislation increases, signifying that the State is, in its wider relationship, assuming the responsibilities of a family and becoming like a family in its spirit and action. Nine-tenths of our Labour legislation is protection which the family used to give, but which, under modern conditions of industry, it cannot give. Nine-tenths of our legislation regarding the weak, from the education of the young by the State to pensions for the aged from the Exchequer, is an extension of the family idea over the whole community—is

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function of the family has been changed and largely supplanted by other functions; its educational and spiritual functions, however, have gained in importance.

an application of the family spirit to State influence, because circumstances have arisen which defeat and baffle the operation of that spirit when left to family influence only. Not only is it true, as I have said above, that the area of human interdependence has widened, but that has been accompanied by a weakening of the economic and industrial power of the family, owing to modern social developments, so that it cannot carry out to the full its protective functions. This is the tendency of every civilised State, and evidently that tendency is in the permanent stream of progress.

But if the family spirit of woman is of the nature of modern social development, and her experience is, therefore, in no way in antagonism to the spirit of the modern State, are her experience and point of view required for purposes of government? There is no bar to her enfranchisement, but is there any need for it? I think there is, for apart from the fact that when there is no bar to enfranchisement, enfranchisement should always follow, the family spirit, interpreted and applied by man alone through the State, may become one of the gravest dangers to

Society. For man is neither the creator nor the protector of the family. That has been the work of woman. The little community grew originally round her hearth. She was the fixed point round which the children clustered and to which the man came. She has given the home form and spirit. And now, when the government of the hearth no longer covers the big world or meets all the conditions of modern life, and the State has to step in and, borrowing from the family idea, protect and conserve human qualities, man, the maker of tribes and nations, man, the worshipper in the larger temple of the State, may, instead of merely infusing the State with the family idea, attempt to substitute the State for the family without exactly seeing what he is doing, and disaster will be the result.

Thus, reverting to the consideration that women cannot bear arms to defend national existence, the effect of the refusal of the franchise to women on that ground is, that national existence in the long years of peace is to be endangered by badly conceived legislation, whilst the experience and point of view which can save the nation from such a calamity, are not to be

consulted and used, because, under the remote contingency of invasion, women with rifles at their shoulders could not line our hedgerows or die in our ditches. The State is to be subverted in peace lest its citizens may not all be able to fight in war.*

My point can be illustrated by reference to several questions now before us that show the evils of masculine Socialism. There is, for instance, the agitation for feeding school children at the public expense. If this became universal and were independent of need, one of the functions essential to family life would be taken from the family and transferred to the State. The economic self-sufficiency of the family would be fundamentally affected and its moral opportunities limited. This would be much more the case if maintenance became the practice as well as feeding. But the masculine mind runs in this direction. Such is its logic. When it gives itself rein and tries to imagine the relationship

* I do not discuss this argument on its own merits and point out that even male electors are not all capable of fighting. The whole argument seems to be so absurd and so foreign to the subject that I have only referred to it as opening a convenient avenue for the consideration of women's function in the protection and maintenance of States.

of men and women under its Utopias, it is much tempted to plan for a community of wives, as Plato did, or the State payment and selection of mothers, as some modern scientists and masculine Socialists do. Naturally, masculine Socialism, which cannot help having some opinions, even if they are vague, as to how the family is to fare in days to come, now and again presents it devoid of some of its essential completeness, and the Philistine critic—not, indeed, that in either practice or spirit is he so purely intentioned as the wicked Socialist is—professes much offence in consequence.

The experience and mind of women are, therefore, required to prevent the family State being created from male experience only. Whoever considers that the tendency to which I have been referring means that the State is to take the place of the family is mistaken, but women alone will take care that this does not happen. Women's political influence will be cast for the maintenance of the family at the same time as it will support the family State. It will discriminate between temporary necessity and permanent change. It will not refuse to feed school children

neglected by parents or starving owing to family poverty, but it will retain as an ideal, not the State but the family care of youth, and will, therefore, do what it can to establish the family on a sound economic foundation so that it may fulfil its functions. It will have no difficulty in reconciling the apparent dualism of a family existing with its own economics within the family State.

Moreover, during the approach towards Socialism woman's mind will do valuable work in discriminating between those forms of property which, by their nature, should be subject to individual and family control, and those other forms of property which should be subject to social control. Women will aid that reconciliation of apparently conflicting opposites, individualism and collectivism, which Socialism must bring about if it is to be successful in its working, because women's experience and social functions have taught her things of which men know nothing regarding the reconciliation of obedience and freedom in conduct.

Socialism is a form of Society in which the discipline and authority of the State and the freedom of the individual both find

satisfactory expression. Now the best example of that organisation which we know is the family, and the family is not a masculine institution. Therefore, the Socialist State cannot be masculine only. It must be created from the same experiences, motives, and sentiments, from which the family itself has been built up. In a much more literal sense than the expression is generally supposed to mean, the family is the foundation of the State. In short, it is not merely to do justice to women, not merely to give women a sense of citizenship, not merely, that is, for the reasons used by Radicalism when demanding the franchise for agricultural labourers, that Socialists should favour women's suffrage. It is because women's experience is different from men's that women should be enfranchised.

Such is a view of the franchise, its reason, and its inevitability, stated in accordance with the principles of Socialist organisation. The Whig idea of representation voiced by the Tory leader Disraeli was that "every element that obtains the respect and engages the interest of the country" should be enfranchised. When that opinion was given, the mass of the

people were regarded as inferior beings to the classes. Some qualitative difference was supposed to divide them from their betters. The supposition that that difference exists has not survived the experience of the last two or three generations. All elements now obtain the respect and engage the interest of the country, and the reason for enfranchisement being hedged in by entanglements of property, or education, or sex, has completely disappeared. No half-way house, no fanciful resting-place can be final. There is an outward movement in the franchise until adult suffrage is reached—or political instincts die out.

Chapter III.

THE POLITICAL ORGANISATION OF THE STATE.

We have come to the conclusion that life is the chief test of citizenship, and that experience in life is the contribution which the State must ask its enfranchised citizens to bring to its thought and action, and we must now consider how this enfranchised citizen is to make his will felt.

I.

We must return to the Socialist conception of the State. The State is the embodiment of the general will, the will of all organically unified, of all, working not as groups or parties wish but as the community wishes, each section finding in the whole just as much response for its particular ideals as, for the time being, the whole is obliged by its vital conditions to give to it. By the State, the Socialist does not mean some coercive authority ruling over individuals as an outside power, nor yet a majority

ruling by force; he means something of the nature of an organic body in which the various organs find a place in a unified personality, and discover their liberty in that personality. The State is, therefore, the political personality of the whole community, both in its internal and external relationships.

The Socialist has taken over from the individualist Radical the expression and thought of "majority rule," and has been misled, in consequence, regarding his idea of Democracy and of State authority. An election is held, a majority is secured by one party or another, and a Ministry is formed to carry out a programme of election pledges. But the programme may not be carried out, and may never be carried out on the lines of the platform speeches, because the governing authority is not responsible to its majority alone but also to its opposing minority. It becomes the representative of the whole. Legislation after discussion comes to be the proposals of the majority modified by the rational criticism and effective opposition of the minority. The majority settles the principles and the aims of legislation, but the

minority must always be an important factor in determining how far the principles are to be carried and how near the goal is to be approached. The majority as a legislating power works not for itself but for Society. We are made familiar with the point involved in this argument by the criticisms of those who are agitating for Proportional Representation, and by individualists generally. They say that it is not all the people but only an active section of the people who rule. The answer is that the majority vote indicates the General Will, but that the representatives returned by the majority have to observe the wish of the minority in their actions.*

Moreover, there is another important limitation imposed on the power of majorities. They cannot violate the reason of the community. This involves various kinds of conditions. They must show that they can carry out their opinions in a practical way. They must not accompany their changes with too great shocks. Above all, they cannot go contrary

* They do not always do this consciously, but the pressure of public opinion soon tells on governments. One of the most flagrant errors in political phraseology to-day is the application of the term "compromise" to this condition of things.

to the moral sense either of their own followers, or of a considerable minority. A majority acts not by force, but by persuasion. Governments have to lean on justice, not on power. Political authority to be acceptable must be moral authority.

This is shown in the legislative acts of every government. When the life of Parliament is prolonged, as in Great Britain, the minority may suffer more than it ought by Parliament drifting out of touch with public opinion. But the essential point is, that under democratic government, "majority rule" is not an accurate description of the governing force. Representative government, in spite of occasional experiences to the contrary, is not the government of the majority but the government of the whole people.

Doubt has been cast upon this by those who take an individualistic view of Democracy. They regard the State as nothing but a collection of separate individuals, each one of whom performs the same political function as the rest, and they look upon the representative on governing bodies as a servant who does the will of the citizens upon instructions. Biologically speaking, neither in the language or

in the ideas of those critics is there found the trace of a notion of State organisation. An election is a consultation amongst the electors. The representative's only function is to express other people's opinions as faithfully as he can—to be a kind of mouthpiece passive rather than active, a gramophone true in word, inflection, and tone. This corresponds very well with Rousseauism, but not with Socialism. It is a sound political view for those who believe that the Social Contract deprived the individual citizen of his freedom, and that the task of Democracy is to annul the Contract and restore man to his natural state of liberty. But it belongs to the political ideas of the eighteenth century rather than to those of the twentieth.

The Socialist State is not a collection of separate persons like a heap of stones. It is a body differentiated into organs and functions like a higher organism. Its governing organ is not controlled by a disconnected section of individuals; it receives its life and its orders from the general life of Society. An election is not a consultation between electors, but a judgment of the community on the work done and to be done by the governing function. The

politician does not express other people's opinions but his own. The electors and himself derive their intellectual being and social ideals from the Society in which they live, and, therefore, the relationship between them is not that of master and servant, but of two personalities deriving their life from the same source and agreeing or disagreeing regarding their common interests. If the idea of master and servant is to be retained as part of representative government (and it is very misleading) the master is the whole of Society, not a party and not a majority. The representative represents Society, he is not the delegate of the majority which elected him. His responsibility is to the whole and not only to a part. He defines his opinions, he makes his point of view clear, he explains his immediate proposals, and he is accepted or rejected. If he belongs to an accepted majority, Society has told him that it agrees that his general outlook is good; if he, in his practical proposals, alarms Society, or shows it that he is incompetent, or adopts methods which violate its sense of justice, Society will reject him, and it will do so on one, or both, of two grounds. It will either have

lost confidence in his general principles, or, whilst retaining that confidence, it will have ceased to believe in him himself. If it then places him and his section in a minority, it will have indicated that it either believes in the principles and outlook of some other section, or that, whilst not believing in those principles or outlook altogether, it nevertheless feels that with that section in power it will avoid some unpleasant experience which it dreads very much at the time. If the former is the case, the defeated minority must undertake an educational campaign to restore belief and confidence in its point of view and proposals and to change the attitude of the country towards the principles represented by the party in power; if the latter is the case, the minority's task will be to see that the legislation proposed by the majority is in principle what the nation wants (and though in a minority it will recieve national support for that), and the Parliamentary conflict will then turn upon details much more than upon principles.

Thus it is that, when great principles, as for instance whether a democracy or an aristocracy should rule, divide parties, and the nation has decisively decided in

favour of one, the other abandons its principles and, accepting the situation, really comes to an end, although in history it appears to emerge into a new activity round a new conflict over principles which arise as a result of the new conditions.* The success of the Reform agitation in 1832 ended the old Tory Party and gave birth to a new one; the general acceptance of the collectivist principle which followed closely upon the enfranchisement of the working classes in 1867 and 1884 ended the old Liberal Party, and a new one is now being created; our present Labour Party is but the nucleus of a new party which is to solve some of our most pressing social problems in accordance with certain general principles of State responsibility, the discussion and statement

* It must also be noted that at such times of re-formation of parties, there is really a redistribution of interests between the political camps. Thus, Cobden writing to Parkes said: "The great capitalist class formed an excellent basis for the Corn Law movement . . . but I very much doubt whether such a state of society is favourable to a democratic political movement. . . . If Bright should recover his health and be able to lead a party for parliamentary reform, in my opinion Birmingham will be a better home for him than Manchester."—Morley: *Life of Cobden*, II., pp. 199-200.

of which have marked the passing of the nineteenth into the twentieth century.

But this progression cannot be described in terms of an individualist democracy, as the coercion of "majority rule" or the servitude of political representatives; it can be explained only in terms of an organised State, with organs and functions becoming more and more differentiated, with a "life" of its own, growing, developing, from which arise the principles which create parties and afford political convictions for individuals.

My argument can be enforced in many different ways. I might, for instance, draw a parallel from the sphere of natural science. Early last century detailed discoveries in geology and biology had accumulated a mass of material which, by reason of its very existence, challenged the mind of man to set it in a system and thus give it a meaning. Why was the life of the Cambrian and Silurian rocks simple; why was that of the Lias more complex; why was that of the Tertiaries still more complex? Why in biology were there similar organs in different animals? Why did the higher animals evolve through an embryonic stage which reproduced lower

animal forms? Why did animals bear rudimentary organs of which they made no use? The search for a systematising idea was not the work of one man. Every scientist of intellectual vigour had the quest thrust upon him by the state of natural science. Attempt after attempt was made to find the answer. Erasmus Darwin, Lamarck, and scores of others, thought and theorised. At last two men simultaneously discovered the truth, Darwin and Wallace, whilst a third, Spencer, was working with the idea on an adjoining field. The history of the establishment of the theory of evolution amongst the universally accepted axioms of science, relates not to the genius of a man but to the growth of human knowledge. A small discovery is made; it leads to others; old systems of thought prove inadequate to explain the new facts; the old universe of the mind is upset. There seems to be an unfolding of the purposes of creation going on. The workers are not toiling like dogs following out a scent with noses to the ground; they are like men filled with the glory of a vision which they seek to explain.

But there is no need for illustrations from other fields. Politics itself supplies

what is required, and to keep the case within the scale upon which this book is planned, I shall refer only to what emerged from the decay of social organisation at the end of the Middle Age. The Middle Age left Europe to a confused and prolonged political contest between the military authorities created by Feudalism, the classes of producers which under Feudalism had been subordinated, and, particularly, the organisation of those inferior classes in the great trading centres, often established as city republics, like Florence. Here was a complexity of active forces—political, economic, religious—challenging the human mind to consider their problems and take up an attitude regarding them. The Feudal System had broken down on its military side as well as on its economic side. Gunpowder was destined to have as much influence on political as on military science; the widening of the market in which goods were exchanged struck a fatal blow not only at the rule of the landed aristocracy, but also at the world rule of Holy Rome. The enfranchisement of the middle-class, the growth of Nonconformity, the politics of the Tudor and Stuart reigns, sprung from the same social conditions,

were different aspects of these conditions, created the parties, the schools, the champions, associated with these times. Abelard, Scotus Erigena, Luther, Wycliffe, Roger Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, and the other leading figures of that long transition time found their subjects and their inspiration in their Society, and the service they did to humanity was that of interpreters. They made the individual conscious of the purpose and the plan of the social changes going on. Through them, the incoherent will of Society became coherent. That is the relationship between leader and multitude, between man and Society, between party and State.

Therefore, as a preliminary to all accurate thought regarding how Society grows and changes through the action of its political function, must be a clear conception of the General Will of Society in its relation to political parties and Parliamentary majorities. This General Will is not the agreement of electors upon programmes. It is not the will of all individuals. Society as a whole has inherited habits, modes of thought, axioms of conduct, traditions both of thought and activity; it has accumulated within itself certain forces and

tendencies just as a living organism has. The General Will is this inheritance regarded as a force making for change or against change. It may be modified rapidly as it occasionally was during the transition from the Middle Age, as it was towards the end of the eighteenth century, as it was when the idea of evolution was accepted.* But if individuals or organisations run violently counter to it, it concentrates itself in producing reaction as a form of self-defence. Its strength, its enlightenment, its willingness, determine the rapidity and the direction of progress. Politicians have a glimmering of its power and its independence when they speak of public opinion as something which controls them. Conservatives pay too much homage to its stability; individualist Radicals and those Socialists who cherish the errors of Radical politics have failed to understand its enormous capacity to resist

* In this respect, the experiments of De Vries in pursuance of those of Mendel seem to throw a suggestive light upon its movements. The conditions under which revolutions have produced stable results is surely one of the most obviously important branches of sociological study, and yet, so far as I know, no one has ever examined the matter with scientific care.

change when an attempt is made to assault rather than to persuade it. Thus, if we can conceive a social revolution to be even possible, the only result of it which we can predicate with certainty would be a furious reaction caused by the General Will becoming active in defence of the General Habit.

Socialists should, therefore, think of the State and of political authority not as the expression of majority rule or of the will of any section, but as the embodiment of the life of the whole community, resisting change owing to its past inheritance, and yet endowed with the potentialities of a greater perfection because its past must fructify in its future.*

II.

These distinctions are not merely academic and verbal. They are real. They decide what the Socialist attitude should

* I need hardly remind my readers that the views expressed in this section spring from the assumption that it is the whole of Society and not merely a class in Society that is developing towards Socialism. The consistent exponent of the class struggle must of course repudiate these doctrines, but then the class struggle is far more akin to Radicalism than to Socialism.

be regarding proposals for making the State the most perfect embodiment that is possible of the life of the community. If we start with these conceptions of the State and its modes of operation, it seems to me that a whole series of political proposals founded upon individualist views of Democracy must be rejected by Socialists because they are not in accord with the Socialist view of the State and of government. How, for instance, can we reconcile this view with the demand to supplant representative government by the government of delegates; responsible government by the Referendum; elections fought upon programmes and principles by popular initiative?

Occasionally the representative becomes master. Some think it must always be so, and the doctrine is laid down that members of Parliament should be delegates, that their work should be submitted to a popular vote, and so on. But if members of Parliament are delegates, for whom are they delegates? Obviously, they cannot be the delegates of the whole community because in every electorate there is a minority. Nor can they be the delegates of those who voted for them, for in the life of the

shortest of Parliaments—even during one session—many questions have to be settled, the pressing importance of which was unforeseen at the election, and upon which members of Parliament have had no mandate.* Further, at elections candidates may speak of the general principles of bills, but they are not in a position to explain the details which will be in the bills when they appear. Now, some of the most strenuous Parliamentary battles have turned upon details, and it is absolutely impossible to devise any method by which the votes given by members of Parliament on such occasions can, with any common sense and accuracy, be described as delegate votes. The delegate theory is unworkable in practice; it can never correspond to the facts of government; if insisted upon, it tends to deteriorate the quality of representation and the effort spent upon spreading the idea is wasted so far as it aims at making Parliament more accurately express public needs. Conscience and conviction can never be abstracted from Parliamentary action, and neither of these

* This is discussed from another point of view when Proportional Representation is considered. See Vol. I., pp. 142 *et pass.*

can be confined within the narrow bounds of action prescribed by the delegate theory. The task of the elected person is to interpret the life of the State, to understand its immediate tendencies, to measure the force of its vital impulses and map out their directions, to remove obstacles that are in the way of those making for righteousness, and to place obstacles in the way of those making for unrighteousness. But this is not the work of a delegate but of a man responsible to his own character and intelligence. His general point of view and his principles have to be accepted by the people, but no one can guide his hand and put words in his mouth day by day. The position of the representative cannot be described in terms of individualist popular sovereignty.

But even the theory of delegacy does not meet the full requirements of the individualistic view of the sovereignty of the people, and therefore a more comprehensive change in Parliamentary practice is proposed. The coherence of Parliamentary government must be destroyed altogether, and, in the name of abstract democratic perfection of an individualist character,

the Referendum is advocated. Under this system of government, Parliament will draft and consider bills, but these bills, when Parliament is done with them, are to be subject to a vote of the people, when they may be rejected or accepted, but not amended.

On the face of it, the proposal seems to be democratic in the sense that it increases the effective control of the people over legislation. In reality, it only increases the power of the interests which stand for the *status ante quo*. For it is only an effective power to negative. When the people accept, they exercise no power. The Referendum is not a participation of the people in legislation; it is a participation of the people in opposing legislation.* The position can best be explained by a statement of the stages through which a bill goes on its way to the statute book. It is

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* Thus, something may be said in favour of the Referendum in a State which has become so corrupt that its legislation is the subject of financial bargaining, and where this method has been carried on for so long that it has fixed itself in national habit. *Cf.* Oberholtzer's *Referendum in America*; Commons' *Races and Immigrants in America* also urges that in States of mixed nationalities the Referendum has a unifying influence.

first of all introduced, but this is generally a mere formality, though its general provisions are sometimes explained at this stage and a debate may take place. After that it is printed. It then comes up for a second reading, and the member who votes for a second reading indicates that he agrees with it sufficiently in its main intentions to favour its being sent to a Committee for detailed consideration and amendment. In Committee, it is considered word by word and clause by clause; it is discussed in all its bearings and possibilities, and often emerges very greatly altered. Only those who have followed in detail the discussions in Committee are fully equipped to defend the bill as it then stands. It next passes through its report stage, when the House of Commons, as a whole, has an opportunity of considering it in detail as amended by the Committee and of saying whether it approves of the details individually; and, finally, it has to be put to a third reading, when the House has to say whether the bill in its final form and taken as a whole is acceptable or not.

If to this process a referendum is added, what really happens? What added share in government is actually given to

the people? Every member of Parliament knows that the only time when Parliament has a really effective control over legislation is when a bill is being discussed in Committee, when amendments in detail and explanations on every doubtful point are made and given. But the people can make no amendments in detail, and they can receive nothing like full information. Such a thing is physically impossible; and even if arrangements could be made for taking two or three hundred national votes during a year—or even half a dozen, if only important bills had to be submitted to the vote—these votes would be of no value. All that a referendum does, is to allow the people to participate in a third reading division.

Even this, however, is effected only in a most imperfect way. A member of Parliament votes for or against a third reading after the principles and details of a bill have been thoroughly discussed either in his own presence or in the presence of men with whom he co-operates. During its passage through the House voluminous information regarding it, in the shape of speeches, amendments, papers, memoranda, is sent to him; and when his final vote has

to be given he has been able to consider the soundness of the principle of the measure, the practicality of its details, its relation to existing law, its effectiveness in securing its object, the necessity of its compromises—in short, he is in a position to place it in its social setting and on a balance of considerations to exercise his judgment on its merits. That is the idea of the third reading, and it can be carried out only by representatives, by a Parliament which is a differentiated organ in the national life especially formed to execute the necessary legislative functions of Society.

A third reading by popular vote is, however, a totally different thing. The bill has several clauses; it embodies several propositions, and perhaps every proposition is capable of an alternative way of being expressed. The mass of electors from John o' Groats to Land's End have had no opportunity of proposing detailed amendments in Committee, or of following detailed arguments in Committee. They have, therefore, had no preparation for passing judgment on the bill as a practical whole—"the best that can be done under the circumstances." Their

vote can only express an incoherent and ill-considered mixture of motives, partly appropriate to a second reading—principles; partly to Committee—details; partly to a third reading—practicality of compromise. In a country like Switzerland, where the legislative function is of secondary importance owing to the decentralisation of politics which is the result of the political past of the community, or in places like the Western States of America, where social organisation is as yet in a rudimentary form, or in States, again like Switzerland, where one economic interest and type of character—the peasant—is an enormously predominating factor in national life, or in communities, like some American cities, where corruption has fixed its cancerous roots into the vitals of the people, this method of democratic control may do little harm, and may even be resorted to as the least of evils. In States no larger than Greek cities, every elector in which can be addressed by a loud-voiced man standing on a platform, this system is also practicable. Under such conditions the Referendum is the expression of a primitive type of Society, or the imperfect machinery suited to an unfortunate

condition of Society. But in a country like Great Britain, where the political function of Society is of supreme importance to social well-being, and where complicated relationships between one class of citizens and the other classes, or between individual citizens, can be maintained only by an elaborate system of legislation, the Referendum must result in unnecessary postponements of legislation, in the hardening of social structure and in making Society immobile, in the retardation of social experiments by legislative action.* As a substitute for a Second Chamber, the Referendum will offer more obstacles to legislative change of a fundamental character than the House of Lords itself. And this is so, not because the people are reactionary but because the Referendum machinery breaks down under the political conditions of the modern industrial State. To apply it to our political conditions is like an attempt to drive the "Rocket" engine fifty miles an hour.

To believe so is offering no insult to the intelligence of electors. A mass vote on a

* Dicey in *Law and Opinion in England*, p. 61, describes the referendum as "a device for retarding Socialistic innovations."

number of details embodied in a bill must, of its nature, be reactionary, simply because the process is unwieldy. People may favour change in certain directions, but, by reason of habit or personal interest, are not prepared to favour any specific proposals to accomplish that change. Everyone opposed to the principles of a bill will naturally vote against it; sections strongly opposed to this provision and that, though accepting the principles, will, to an important extent, combine against it; sections who consider that the principles are sound but are carried too far or are not carried far enough, will recruit the opposition to it. Thus the interests menaced by it will have an extra opportunity by a Referendum vote to save themselves. Or, we may put it that the Referendum appeals to interests not ideas, and that it, therefore, does not strengthen those idealistic qualities in the community upon which progress depends. The legislative function does not always lead opinion, but it leads in practical opinion—that is, it makes up its mind to act perhaps after public opinion is in favour of acting, but before public opinion knows how to act.

It is not without good reason that the

anti-social interests to-day, frightened by the criticism levelled at their position, and now aware that under our present constitution legislation—and, consequently, social change—is easy, are beginning to advocate a Referendum as a means of crippling the power of Parliament and of hampering the expression of the common will. The experience of Switzerland is quite conclusive on this point.*

There is another kind of objection to the Referendum which will not be treated lightly by the thoughful politician. Direct Democracy must bring primary instincts more into play. The appeal to a crowd must be couched in vague and general terms. It must have scintillating points about it. This will be taken into consideration by politicians competing for

* Thus Lloyd and Hobson, *The Swiss Democracy*, p. 219: "The great progressive measures securing large new functions for the federal government, the factory legislation, the nationalisation of railroads, the alcohol monopoly, and the national bank, etc., ripened in the Legislative Assembly earlier than in the country; many of these laws, or the constitutional amendments enabling them, were rejected once or more by the people. . . . Most measures obtained the assent of one or both legislative assemblies long before they were put into a form acceptable by the people."

popularity. Intention will overshadow practicality. The commonly heard remark that the platform style is no use in the House of Commons indicates that the platform mind fails in the House of Commons. The appeal to the people at elections is different in its nature from a reference of a bill to them. The one is on general proposals; the other is on practical details. But the practical details will have to be enlivened and legislation popularised, not by way of improving it but of making it more sensational, more grandiloquent, more effusive, if the people are to be roused up to vote for bills separately.*

* The history of the purchase of the railways by the Swiss State is a warning of how unsuitable the Referendum is in a modern community. Swiss railways were built on cantonal and not on federal franchises, and were, therefore, a network of confusions. There were preliminary discussions about nationalisation extending from 1883 to 1891. In the latter year the Assembly agreed to purchase the Central Railroad system. A referendum was demanded, and the usual thing happened. A combination of all interests and oppositions defeated the project. In 1897 the Federal Council again moved. This time the proposal was flashy. It had a propaganda swing about it, and it was carried on a referendum. But then it was found that it would not work. Litigation that threatened to be endless, followed. New arrangements were entered upon, and an agreement which might have been come to

This will tend to increase the shop-window display of legislation, and to lessen what precise accuracy there is in Acts of Parliament—and there is nothing to spare now. The crowd from its very nature cannot be a legislature.

When we consider what influences will be increased by the change, our disquiet is only enhanced. The press will become more important, organisations dealing with specific interests will become more powerful. Parties will, therefore, fall more into the hands of economic interests.*

This view is borne out by what experience we have of the Initiative. The most thorough-going supporters of the Referendum lay it down that the power to initiate legislation as well as that to veto proposals should rest with the people. The Referendum has no constructive value. It is at best a protection against

ten years before but for the referendum, was finally concluded.

* This is already seen at our bye-elections, where Governments are often fought on the one issue which happens to be under discussion in the House of Commons at the time. The publican rising when the Licensing Bill was under consideration, the Coal Consumers' League campaign when the Miners' Eight Hours Bill was being discussed, turned the tide at bye-elections.

corrupt legislatures, but is no remedy for neglectful ones. Therefore the people ought to have the power to instruct legislatures to do certain things. As the Zurich Constitution somewhat quaintly puts it: "The people exercise the law-making power with the assistance of the State legislature." But here again, facts shatter appearances. What advantage has the power of initiative over the power of election? Candidates must consult popular wishes and promise to do what the people want them to do. I know that the work of the representative does not always agree with the will of the represented. But if the explanation of that is that the representative deliberately violates his pledges, sets aside what he knows to be the popular wish, and gets pardon either because he deceives the public or buys them, this surely must destroy every hope entertained that the Initiative will give better results than the representative system, because it explains the failure of the representative system by the failure of Democracy itself.*

* Lloyd and Hobson, *The Swiss Democracy*, p. 221: "The Initiative has certainly not proved so far a very serviceable tool, the only case where it has

But we may consider the matter a little further. The expression of the popular will by the Initiative shows the operation of motives and impulses the opposite of those brought into play by the Referendum. The crowd mind is united on aspirations, on phrases, on general intention, by the Initiative, and divided into personal interests by the Referendum. Thus, a process of Initiative and Referendum means that an appeal is to be made first of all to the unifying aspirations of the people, then a further appeal is to be made to their disrupting interests. The result of this must surely be that no progress will be made. For, as the last word remains with the disruptive interests, the Initiative never can be so effective in getting things done as the Referendum is in preventing things being done. On the other hand, in the working of the representative system unifying aspirations and disruptive interests are blended and combine in a mandate to one party or other to go in a

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been successfully evoked being the least creditable legislative action of the Swiss Democracy in recent years, viz., the passing of the famous 'slaughter-house' article drafted under the influence of an anti-Semitic agitation."

certain direction, for a certain distance, and at a certain pace. The working of the representative system combines the opposing tendencies, and as the centripetal and centrifugal forces in the universe, harnessed together, produce that motion by which the suns are kept in their places and the relations of the universe remain in their fixed order, so the art of government consists in uniting the opposing motives and mental attractions of the citizens, so that an orderly and steady advance may be possible. A resolution of composite political forces into their elements would produce in Society such a catastrophe as would happen if for one instant the composite causes of motion in the universe were dissolved into their elements.

III.

The frequency with which one hears that representative government has broken down is due to several reasons. It does not always work so well as it ought, because the personnel of Parliament is not always so good as it might be, and the Parliamentary machine is somewhat antiquated and needs renewing and reconstructing. There is also an enthusiastic minority in every

State which, finding progress slow and Parliamentary procedure cumbersome, jumps to the conclusion that the former is the result of the latter, and so is quite confident that "the people," if they only had the chance, would not only do righteously but do it speedily. One hardly cares to combat such a generous view, but, with sadness, it has to be put aside as unfortunately mistaken. It betrays a lack of what may be called "constitutional intelligence," just as a failure to work the Parliamentary machine with national obligations in mind may properly be described as a lack of "constitutional morality." The slowness of progress and the cumbersomeness of the Parliamentary machine are not related as effect and cause, but both must be taken as proofs that the people themselves require enlightenment. It is the popular will that is at fault. The *vox populi* does not fail to be the *vox Dei* because charlatans are the trumpets through which it speaks, but because the *mens populi* is not the *mens Dei*. If a change of system were really to show that the people have been intelligently wide-awake all the while, the revelation would be a miracle. The mass of the people must

always be difficult to move, but under our present representative system it moves quicker and more accurately than under any other system. The impatient idealists must be content to face the facts, the chief of which is that they *are* a minority, and that no mere change in the machinery of government can get for them a greater measure of sympathy than they now receive. No mechanical contrivance can give to a minority the powers of a majority. It is, of course, true, that the governing mechanism may be faulty, and that it may be devised on a wrong plan; but I have tried to show that the Socialist conception of the State and of the political organisation which must be evolved before the principles of Socialism have been completely embodied in the community, is consistent only with some form of representative government; or, in biological language, in the Socialist State the political function must be specialised as the digestive function is in an animal organism, and cannot be diffused through the mass of the community.

It still remains of the greatest importance that this organ should be in the

highest state of efficiency, so that in its working it does not hamper the citizenship will, but fulfils its purposes. We must, therefore, at this point discuss what are the functions of this political organ, and how it can be rendered effective.

It is too often assumed that the only purpose of Parliament is to legislate, and because it does not do that in hot haste, it is called a talking shop. But, however brilliant may be the genius who is at the head of a Department, or however able the draughtsmen of bills, discussion in Parliament improves bills and makes their principles and details known in the country. Parliament ought, therefore, to discuss before legislating. Two circumstances not only hamper it in this duty, but threaten to make the fulfilment of it altogether impossible. The first is the number of members of Parliament, and the second is the factious character of the Opposition. The presence of six hundred and seventy members at Westminster destroys Parliament as a deliberative assembly. Half the number would mean a great increase in the output of legislation, and would also secure a considerable improvement in its

quality. Much of the criticism which the House of Commons has to bear arises solely from the unwieldy size of the assembly, and some of the proposals which are made from time to time for reforming it—for instance, shortening speeches—will be quite abortive so long as its present numerical strength is maintained. It is too much of a crowd, and it is acquiring the weakness of a crowd—loquacity, slip-shod neglect of detail, vagueness of purpose, subordination to authority, lack of individual distinction. A numerous Parliament means the control of Cabinets and regimenting by Whips, with the suppression of the private member as an inevitable consequence. These things are generally catalogued amongst the crimes of the party system. They may be used by the party machine and turned to its ends, but they have no more to do with the party system than has a hot summer which may be of advantage to a government by sending its opponents to the moors and hills before the end of a session. They arise mainly from the fact that Parliament is a crowd and not a business assembly. If payment of members were to cut down the House of Commons

to half its present numbers, or if a statesman were to arise sufficiently bold to do such a thing in the public interest, much of the hostile criticism of Parliamentary government would cease to have a justification. Parliament would feel its own wholeness and unity. It would become coherent. It would function efficiently.

The second reason for Parliamentary failure is, in part, a result of this first one. A factious Opposition can exist much more easily in a Parliament which is a crowd than in one whose dimensions do not exceed proper business limits. The present theory upon which the Opposition works is generally credited to the Fourth Party with which the careers of Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. Balfour are associated. These politicians—particularly the former—introduced into Parliamentary government the methods of the assassin. Though not the author of the aphorism : "the duty of the opposition is to oppose," the ethics of Lord Randolph sunk lower than that *bon mot* implies. Frankly and brutally he adopted the theory that there was no honesty and no patriotism in politics. The country and the House of Commons were both to be subordinated and sacrificed to

partisan advantage.* Governments were to be worried, the country misled, all the resources of the mischievous intelligence were to be drawn upon by an Opposition, lest as Lord Randolph Churchill said in reply to Lord Salisbury, the proceedings of the Opposition become "weak and inane." House of Commons' procedure has thus become an interesting game for parties to play and for the reckless spirit to enjoy.

This theory of an Opposition is responsible for the systematic obstruction of public business which is practised daily in the House of Commons and upon Parliamentary committees. When a question is properly discussed it is not then settled as a matter of course. Whether that happens or not depends upon whether there is an agreement between the Whips, whether orders of the day succeeding the one under discussion, are acceptable or not to any small section of the House. "Why are you in such a state," said a Unionist member to me one day not long after I first entered Parliament, and whilst I was

* For an account of Lord Randolph Churchill's Parliamentary ethics, see Mr. Winston Churchill's *Lord Randolph Churchill*, particularly pp. 188 *et seq.*, second edition.

still ignorant of its ways, "about our talking? Has not the government got the second reading of one bill? It is an abuse of its mechanical majority to force through a second." And he proceeded to enlighten me as to what the government itself did by way of obstruction when it was in opposition. Mr. Balfour was also both explicit and candid to a committee which recently considered the business of the House. He replied, in answer to a question about non-controversial bills*:—

"What happens, of course, is that if you bring forward measures which might be considered non-controversial they immediately become controversial if discussing them embarrasses the Government or is thought to be likely to embarrass the Government. That is the real position. Putting it in its brutal truth that is what happens, and always will happen, so long as it does embarrass the Government."

And so, Parliament has, perforce, to protect itself against this wanton mischievousness by guillotine schemes of closure apportioning times for discussing

* Select Committee on House of Commons (Procedure)—89 and 181, 1906. Question 212.

sections of bills, supplemented by closure of the ordinary kind when obstruction is being systematically followed, or when a question has been adequately discussed, and, particularly when a prolongation of the discussion by the Opposition will prevent any decision being come to upon it.

But the guillotine really kills Parliament. If it prevents obstruction from securing its immediate object—the destruction of the measure under consideration—it does not put an end to it. Indeed, obstruction under the guillotine becomes more diabolical. Baffled in its immediate object, it turns to destroy Parliament itself. For the allotment of time does not mean that the Opposition is compelled to concentrate its attention upon important amendments. Were that so, the guillotine would be successful, but under it, obstruction employs its ingenuity to waste the allotted time on matters of trivial importance, so that, in the end, the bill, almost undiscussed, leaves the House of Commons without the authority which a measure that has gone through that process ought to carry with it. The result is, Parliament becomes ridiculous, and it loses dignity and authority.

The minority in Parliament is threatening to kill Parliament in order to spike the guns of the majority. It is attempting to become a tyranny. It cannot dominate the majority in settling the principles of legislation, but it can dominate it in determining the quantity of legislation. Quite clearly, then, the majority requires to protect itself against the minority, but in all attempts to do so hitherto, it has only succeeded in undermining the influence of Parliamentary government. This is the gravest part of the crime. The House of Commons is being degraded, and a degraded House of Commons really means a degraded democratic authority. The aristocracy and plutocracy find this to be to their advantage. The tussle between them and Democracy is not whether reverence and deference are to be paid, but whether they are to be paid to aristocratic or to democratic institutions. Deference is an essential condition of a Society made stable by law and order, but if the democratic institutions which are the custodians of democratic authority, are cheapened and so receive no deference and are held in no reverence, upon what foundation is democratic authority to rest? The sections

which view with alarm the growth of democratic power and the determination to use that power for national ends, are wise enough to see that if they degrade the House of Commons, they have shattered the citadel of Democracy—and are fortunate enough to find some sections of the Democracy willing to play that fool's game.

A multiplication of Parliamentary committees is advocated* to meet the difficulty of the cumbersomeness of machinery, and in 1906 two such committees were added to the two previously existing. But this is a poor makeshift. It cannot be extended indefinitely because it would destroy the corporate responsibility of the House of Commons; and, moreover, an obstructive Opposition can easily make the work of these committees abortive, as has been done repeatedly since 1906. Indeed, the gradual strangling of Parliament by the Opposition can be stopped only by a return on the part of the Opposition to a patriotic spirit, or by a determination on

* In so far as this suggestion is also made to increase the control of the elected representatives over House of Commons business, it is discussed in the following chapter.

the part of the electorate to show its displeasure with these dishonest tactics. One can only look mournfully on whilst the partisan spirit of destruction does its work, with hardly a protest from any influential leader being offered to check it. When we are dealing with the illogical, but all the more natural, habits and methods of Parliamentary government that have grown up through centuries, founded not upon law or enforceable rule, but only on a sense of the appropriate and the fair, we have to remember that it is utterly impossible to protect the organisation thus created by amended rules or by mechanical devices of any kind. The fabric of the organisation has been built of the stuff of which honour, good sense, reverence, respect, consist; and when that stuff is no longer available, the fabric which it is required to sustain must crumble, and Parliamentary government must deteriorate. Parliamentary government without the constitutional instinct or habit is an impossibility. As less and less is expected of it, its high state of organisation and efficiency, made possible—if not at all fully realised as yet—by some generations of representative government, will degenerate into lower

forms consistent with the crude individualism of delegates, majority rule, Referendum and—to some extent—proportional representation. In the world of natural science the more complicated forms of life are often the least stable. They are capable of miraculous efforts and deeds, but they are the prey to diseases and breakdowns which are the vicious counterparts of their wonderful possibilities. So it is with the political organ and function in Society. Brought to a high degree of differentiation, it can work with swift accuracy to give expression to the will of the State, to ascertain that will, to adjust State action to individual freedom. But partisanship and an unscrupulous use of the opportunity which such a political condition gives to sectional interests and political rivals, constantly threaten the political organisation; and unless these can be curbed, they may disrupt it altogether and compel the State to fall back upon clumsier, slower, and not so delicately accurate ways of government.*

* The deference which Parliament and its Committees pays to its chairman has just been employed as a cure for some of the evils arising from the tyranny of minorities, and by a new Standing Order,

Short of the more revolutionary changes in form and in spirit to which I have been referring, there are one or two reforms that would give Parliament a chance to do its work better. The vast amount of business which comes before a Parliament like ours makes obstruction easy, and we therefore must put in the very forefront of the changes which are to restore Parliament to its proper dignity a scheme of devolution of work—Home Rule all round. A frank recognition of the national interests of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales would not only tend to preserve that diversity in life which strengthens an imperial stock, but would vastly improve the efficiency of our legislation and give scope for experiments and demonstrations which would make the way of progress broad and smooth.

Then the present methods of Parliamentary Oppositions are encouraged by our Parliamentary habits. Whilst the sittings of the House of Commons are held in the

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power is given to the chairman to select from a number of amendments those which he thinks of real importance and allow only these to be discussed. This is a great improvement on all previous guillotine arrangements.

afternoon and through the evening, an unbusiness-like atmosphere and spirit will pervade the place. After-dinner sittings can never be dissociated from such things as a joke or a demonstration, and their business value is low. If the House were to meet say at ten one morning and two the following afternoon alternately, adjourning always at seven in the evening, more work would be got out of Parliament than it now can give, and the work done would be better. Also, if summer were to be spent in holidays and the Session start in October, both the quantity and the quality of legislation would be improved.

Such changes might bring upon us the "professional politician." The cognomen has become so ugly that few consider for a moment what it means, or wherein it differs from our present state. They are simply content to be frightened by it. The "professional politician" is a man who gives up his time to public affairs. That does not mean that he must become a demagogue. If it did, the melancholy fact cannot be forgotten that the demagogue, belonging to all parties and drawn from all ranks of Society, is already with us.

Nor does it mean that he must be of inferior character. Under our present aristocratic and plutocratic system, politics are deliberately lowered for partisan advantages, and men of leisure and money in Parliament, or out of it but trying to get in, have apparently never considered it to be one of their duties to establish any superiority of political character for themselves or their class. Nor, when we have our "professional politician," will he necessarily use his position for the special benefit of himself or of his class. To-day there are rich men in the House of Commons who honestly consider that the interests of the trade or class to which they belong must override every national consideration, and the House of Lords is an institution whose one *raison d'être* is that it looks after the class interests of the people who sit in it.

Moreover, it is difficult to find any term which describes so accurately as "professional politician" the son of a rich or titled man, taught from his youth up to expect a constituency some time or other—which describes the members of a house like the Cecils or a score of others, to the sons of which, Parliament is a natural

occupation, often enabling them to gain a living; and it is quite impossible to give to men like Burke, Pitt, Peel, Gladstone, any other name. If a man, finding profit indirectly by being in Parliament, belongs to the wealthy or titled classes, he may do little but politics, and be lauded for his public spirit; if he comes from the common people, and his value is directly recognised by the State and he receives payment for his services, he is then only that suspected self-seeker—the "professional politician." If, however, he becomes a Minister, and receives a handsome salary and then claims a relatively even handsomer pension, he suffers from none of the odium of professionalism, but finds himself an object of respect. In these phases of opinion there is neither consistency nor common-sense. They only show how force of habit maintains a sanction, in spite of our democratic leanings, for conduct which is condemned in the poor but applauded in the rich.

The fact is, that a highly differentiated political organ like our Parliament, dealing with a great variety and complexity of matters, cannot carry on its functions if manned by a crowd of rich men of leisure

—most of them having passed the prime of life before they took a keen and detailed interest in legislation, few of them students of the problems they are trying to solve as legislators. We need the "professional politician" just as much as we need the professional engineer, or the professional doctor, or the professional chimney-sweep. The art and science of government is one of the most difficult of all the arts and sciences, and care should be taken to enable it to command the most skilled intelligences. On its administrative side, the permanent official is selected only after much examination, comparison, and testing; but on its legislative side—the side of initiative, of policy, of guidance, of planning and directing—we are still anxious to keep ourselves free from the trained man, from the man who has spent his life in acquiring the knowledge of communal structure, of industrial economics, of social experiment, upon which all wise legislation must be built. The professional politician is simply a man who knows his business and whose heart is in his work, and a Parliamentary system in a democratic State cannot be kept going without him. He will have no more vices

than the unprofessional politician has; he will have abilities and virtues which the other cannot claim.*

There is another criticism which must be made on our Parliament. The historical part of its ceremony is precious, and ought never to be obliterated. The historical part of its procedure is absurd. For instance, why should we still be hampered by having to pass resolutions authorising money bills to be introduced? At one time this was a safeguard erected in defence of liberty. But those days have gone. The safeguards are now cumbering the ground. They are impediments. I am writing during the Budget debates of May, 1909, and the proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the shape of wide enabling resolutions without detail but drafted so as to allow the Chancellor to introduce his Finance Bill, are being discussed uninterpreted and misunderstood. They have to pass committee and report stages. When that is done a Second Reading debate on the Finance Bill then begins and the

* The position of burgomasters in German towns compared with mayors in English towns is an interesting study in the comparative merits of professional and amateur administrators.

committee, report, and Third Reading stages follow. The Budget proposals are, therefore, discussed on six different occasions—and obstructed on six different occasions. The procedure on ordinary bills is not very much better. The committee and report stages tend to duplicate each other, and thus at least a month is wasted every session without giving reliable security that bills will be any better for the cumbersome process—this being the excuse offered for the delay. The lines upon which reform should proceed are quite evident. Parliament as a whole should determine the principles upon which legislation is to be drafted, and for this purpose it might revive the method of resolution. The resolutions might be sent to a committee responsible for drafting the bill, and then the Report to the whole House, carefully guarded against abuse, would succeed and be followed by a third reading. Discussion, deliberation, opportunity to alter details right up to the moment when the bill leaves Parliament, have to be secured consistently with business-like despatch of legislation, and how to combine these two is the problem of Parliamentary procedure.

IV.

A century of discussion has not yet settled in practice how the representative assembly is to be kept in touch with public opinion. For the purpose of electing this assembly, the United Kingdom is divided into 630 constituencies,* the smallest of which contains under 3,000 electors, the largest 50,000, the average number of electors represented by each member being about 11,500. This numerical inequality may to some extent be defended on the ground that it makes some provision for the representation of minorities. Also, under every scheme of federal government there are interests which cannot be properly represented by numerical considerations merely. Thus, the States of the American Union are equally represented in the Senate irrespective of their population, and the same is true regarding the Australian States. The Act of Union between England and Scotland in 1707, and between Great Britain and Ireland in 1800, in reality made the United Kingdom a federation, and since the constitution of

* Returning 670 members.

our House of Lords did not allow us to carry out the ideas embodied in the American and Australian Senates, numerical inequalities have to be recognised in our House of Commons' constituencies. A minimum representation irrespective of the size of their population had to be secured for Ireland and Scotland, and there is no reason for disturbing the arrangement. It would be an abuse of democratic requirements if the 4,500,000 people of Scotland had no more representation in Parliament than the 5,000,000 people of London, or, if the 4,400,000 people of Ireland had no more weight in Parliament than two or three overgrown towns in England. We are often told that the steady reduction in the population of Ireland ought to lead to a corresponding reduction in the representation of Ireland at Westminster. But an opposite conclusion may be argued with some show of reason. For, if the depopulation of Ireland be caused by the legislative mistakes and neglect of the British Parliament, and if the adequacy of representation is to be judged by results, the depopulation of Ireland might be used as an argument in favour of strengthening rather than of

weakening Irish representation in the House of Commons.

The representation of minorities is a subject upon which much needless discussion may be spent. The minority is always represented—so soon as the minority reaches a representable proportion of the electorate. The presence of one or two odd men in the House of Commons sent there by odd handfuls of voters scattered about the country is of no importance to the accuracy of the representative system. The representation which alone counts is that of a body of political opinion of sufficient general importance to be organised for political purposes. If the opinion is so special or so academic as to be little better than a drawing-room fad or a study notion, it has not that political quality which justifies its being represented in the representative assembly. For a test should be placed upon opinions asking for representation. Are they of such a nature as to rouse any general interest? Are they so important as to cause a movement in the social intelligence? Are they vital, and, in consequence, organised? If they are,

they are bound through one channel or other to find representation in every popularly governed country; and if they fail to do this, one may safely assume that they are of no social consequence. At worst, if they cannot make tides in the political world they can help to swell tides. Minorities are always represented unless under the grossest forms of tyranny, when they are over-represented. No special scheme of minority representation would give minorities more legitimate influence than they have in Great Britain to-day.

A consideration of minority representation needs to be based on a clear idea of what Parliament is. Parliament is not a debating society but the legislating organ of the State, and opinion must comply with certain tests before it is of the least consequence for this legislating function. A Parliament representative of the mind of the nation, does not require to contain men holding every odd-and-end view which may find acceptance by a thousand or two individual electors. Before an opinion, or body of opinion, has earned the right (that is, the utility) to Parliamentary representation, it ought to be compelled to go

through a certain evolution. It should have to stand the test of public criticism and be so acceptable as to gain not only a following, but a following which considers it to be of sufficient importance to bring it into the arena of politics in one or other of the several ways in which this can be done. It should also have to win a place in that arena and establish itself in relation to other opinions there at the same time. This is necessary in order that legislative acts may reflect the General Will. And, finally, every opinion which claims Parliamentary recognition should be asked to prove its staying power, lest it may have been favoured by temporary circumstances into a gourd-like growth. When an opinion has weathered these tests successfully, it has either formed round it a respectable national organisation or has become suffused throughout Society; but in either case, it requires no special constituency created for its representation, for it is in a position to take advantage of any popular system of election that may be in operation.

Representation in the legislative organ of Society is the result of the success of the propaganda of an opinion, not a right

that can be claimed for it simply because it exists. The great fuss that is made about minority representation is largely a bogey created by slipshod thinking.*

A difficulty arises, however, when a set of political opinions is sufficiently vital to become organised, and a new political party results. If the party works through previously existing political parties, no electoral trouble need arise. It transforms them while they keep their old name, and makes no sudden change in their organisation. But, if the new party is independent

* One form of it is particularly absurd. It is said that the Tory minority of Ireland, Wales, and Scotland is not represented. But it is. It has no special qualities of its own. If a Tory member were transferred from Birmingham to Swansea his conduct in the House of Commons would not be altered in the slightest degree except in so far as local interests, lying outside party politics, would affect him. But these local interests affect the Liberal equally with the Tory. Indeed, this idea of the local representation of general opinion arises from a confused notion of representation which, in so far as it is rational at all, assumes that the individual as a person and not the individual as a citizen and as a part of the national life, should be represented. This idea, however consistent with the crude notions of eighteenth and ninteenth century individualism, is inconsistent with Socialist ideas of Society.

and seeks representation for itself, more than two candidates may appear for one seat, with the result that the representative elected may have received a minority of votes.* What effect has this upon the working of representative government? On the surface, it is a negation of representative government. Electoral statistics, however, are very complex, and the problem raised by third parties in elections must not be settled offhand.

Our present system, by which the candidate who receives the highest number of votes is elected, irrespective of whether that number is a majority or not, at first sight seems to be self-condemned, because it frequently may mean that a constituency is represented by the nominee of a minority in the constituency; and if triangular contests were general, that would be so. From this very fact, however, triangular contests cannot become general. Parties must calculate their chances under such a system, and the result is that these contests obey a

*This circumstance as an argument for some change in electoral machinery is all the stronger, if it is alleged—as is done at present—that the split affects one old party far more than it does the other.

law of averages and are kept in relation to chances of success and the strength of parties. This happens because party organisations have to weigh probabilities. At the last General Election (1906), in at least seventy or eighty instances, contests were really of the nature of second ballots.*

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* I desire to emphasise the fact that many of our Parliamentary contests to-day are of the nature of Second Ballots with a Labour or a Liberal candidate out of the contest; and so far from our present system having suppressed Labour contests or helped reaction, in my opinion, it has given Labour candidates chances which a Second Ballot would not have afforded, and has also been a great stimulus to energetic political action; and I maintain that these results are legitimate considerations in judging of any particular kind of electoral method. One objection to this often voiced by Socialists—particularly by those in favour of Proportional Representation—is that it places them at the mercy of the other parties. But it does not, for the other parties are not free to do whimsical things, but have to judge what their best policy is in view of existing circumstances, one of the chief elements in which is the active existence of the third party. The consideration, however, is otherwise irrelevant. Socialist candidates when Members of Parliament have to work for a new society not by revolution but by organic change. If their method were revolutionary it would be necessary for them to take care that they receive Socialist votes only, but their method being evolutionary their supporters need only be prepared to follow them in carrying out their immediate programme.

Parties had estimated their strength, studied their interests and acted not in accordance with their rights in the abstract, but in accordance with the circumstances in which they found themselves.

Our present electoral system favours minorities that are politically active. Its uncertainties allow a new, unpolled, aggressive and enthusiastic movement to exercise some terrors upon old parties, to make the most of its spirit as well as its polling strength, and these movements in their early and critical stages thus receive, after an initial test of fitness, electoral opportunities which they would not otherwise have. The uncertainties and the apparent unfairness of the present system render it impossible to be worked with tyrannical party rigidity. This elasticity is all to the good, for in its working it allows for an element in public opinion which is of great political importance, but which cannot be valued by mechanical means: viz., the activity of the will, as well as the mass of the will, of electoral groups.

There is a widespread impression, however, that our present system discourages the formation of new opinion and its

expression at elections. Many electors, it is assumed, would support new ideas and independent candidates, but vote for old party candidates on the ground that if they did not they would be giving another old party candidate, to whom they are opposed, an improved chance of election. They vote not on principle, but for safety. One has heard of this from Socialists as explanations of why they lost elections. It may be true in the beginnings of independent campaigns, but it is of no significance. I doubt if in the whole history of our movement one single Socialist or Labour candidate who was defeated would have been elected under any system of Second Ballot. The real effect seems to have been that our movement, finding some obstacles in the way of Parliamentary representation, was compelled to turn its attention to an apprenticeship on the more circumscribed fields of municipal administration, and to bring itself into contact with the practical thoughts and problems of the time. This has been good for the country and good for Socialism. Then, when the new opinions had been sufficiently tested, had been adjusted to actual affairs, and had won a following large enough to secure their

being represented in Parliament, they were in a position to use the present system of election with as much advantage as any other party. When the minority gained sufficient importance to justify its appearance in Parliament, the present system placed no obstacles in its way.

The effect of our present system of Single Ballot may be summarised as follows:—

(1) It maintains party representation in the country and discourages the election of independent individuals to the House of Commons;

(2) It imposes impediments, in the nature of safeguards, upon new parties—impediments which, however, do not act after the new party has attained a certain measure of success and gained a certain amount of confidence—impediments which mean that the party is entrusted with legislative responsibilities only after it has proved itself in administrative work;

(3) It diminishes somewhat the number of candidates who may be run by a new party at any given election, thus, in its own interests, compelling it to select its best places for its earlier contests, and to turn its energies from capturing the citadel

of legislative authority until it has had some experience in the art of government by the capture of the minor posts of administrative authority in the first instance. While this is going on, no real obstacle is being placed on the propaganda of the new ideas; the hindrances are in the way of the new party being allowed prematurely to assume legislative responsibility contrary to its own real interests and in opposition to social convenience;

(4) It discourages sectionalism and tends to destroy dogmatic and academic differences in parties which have no value in actual life.

These effects seem to me, in the first place, to secure continuity in political evolution; and, in the second place, to guarantee that new movements "in the nature" and not "in the whim" of things are represented in the legislative assembly. The present system thus appears to be, not one for suppressing minorities or for retarding new movements, but for testing them and securing representation for them in a certain way.

But, when third parties are splitting

votes and when decisions apparently quite contradictory to the representation of majorities are being given, the calmest find it difficult to resist a demand for some change. When one goes behind the mere figures of such contests and tries to estimate the force and the direction of the opinion which has to be represented, one sees in such fights the efforts of the political organ to adjust itself to new conditions, the uprising of the ardent new in temporary conflict with the enfeebled old, and so regards the mathematical absurdity in which three-cornered contests sometimes result as of minor importance; but in spite of that, superficial appearances are so much against waiting for conditions to right themselves and for the decisive beginning of a new phase in the political life of the people, that it appears to be necessary to yield to a demand for a mechanical readjustment so as to meet the requirements of simple mathematics during the period when the young idea is struggling for birth and for life.

The first proposal made with this end in view was the Second Ballot. But the experience of the Second Ballot does not commend it. First of all, it makes but little

difference in electoral results,* and then, it has not improved political tone and ethics. The candidate who comes out at the top of a short list of rivals, even when he has not obtained an absolute majority of votes, can generally secure sufficient support from those who have voted for one of his rivals to survive the final ordeal. The top position on the first ballot is a great advantage for the second. The winning horse

* See the *Independent Review*, February, 1905, in which I analysed the results of the Second Ballot in the Municipal Elections in Paris in the previous year, and the then recently completed elections for the Italian Chamber. Regarding the former, I showed that on the bare figures, the result of the Second Ballot was to increase the Republican majority from three to nine, or a difference of just under 4 per cent. in the total results. It was evident, however, that candidates had in some *Arrondissements* been needlessly multiplied on the 1st of May, under the knowledge that on the 8th, parties could secure a straight fight. This was the case in at least three *Arrondissements* where, had there been no Second Ballot, the list of candidates would have been reduced, and the Second Ballot result would have been obtained at first. The real result was, therefore, insignificant. As regards the Italian elections, the Second Ballot only made fifteen party changes, compared with what would have been the result had the candidates at the top of the lists in the first ballot been declared elected. These elections were fought under conditions which ought to have secured a maximum change at the second voting.

generally receives generous backing. The man, or the party, with the cup at his lip, is greatly tempted not to be too squeamish in the efforts he makes to enjoy the pleasure of draining it. So whilst our present system makes us suffer from the minor wrong of an occasional mistake in elections, it shields us at the same time against the degrading bargaining, bribing, and other ways of cadging for majorities which would follow the announcement of the figures of the first election, and which would be kept up until the second voting had closed. The power of the political machine working in the unknown is becoming a menace; if it could work with the known figures of a first election, its evils would be multiplied many times over. We are warding off the dire results of partisan hatred such as the Second Ballot encouraged in Belgium when Liberal voted Catholic to spite the Socialist, and Socialist voted Catholic to spite the Liberal (1894 and 1896). We are protecting ourselves against the graver evil of putting it within the power of small coteries of narrow-minded electors who place some nostrum of their own above general well-being—or who may not have the intelligence to see that they are doing

so—to decide on the Second Ballot who of two candidates is to be sent to Parliament to help to govern the empire. All these evils exist now, but the Second Ballot endows them with new opportunities of activity and new powers of making themselves felt.

If our present system is doomed, a system of Second Ballots, however superficially it may appear to be a mechanical improvement, will not make real progress easier, will not make the democratic will more certain in its political expression, will not raise political judgments to a higher level, will probably make representation more inaccurate than it now is by increasing the amount of temper and bargaining which enters into elections.

The system of Second Ballot, long considered as the only practicable alternative to the present system of election, has, however, been challenged by the advocates of Proportional Representation. This proposal, popularised at first by Mr. Hare and supported by John Stuart Mill, was for long considered quite impracticable (except in school board elections, where, in one of its several forms, its results

won for it but few friends), and though it retained the support of one or two distinguished men whose politics were rather of the lamp, the study table, and the abstract, it almost ceased to have any significance. The triple contests which arose with the Labour Party gave the Proportional Representation advocates a chance; the obvious objections to a Second Ballot made their chance good; and so Proportional Representation has again become a living interest in political controversy.

Its fundamental assumption is both simple and attractive. In representative assemblies, both majorities and minorities ought to be represented in proportion to their numbers in the country. Only in this way can all kinds of legitimate opinion have a due influence in the State. Majorities will still be majorities, but they will not have an undue measure of power as they have at present.* I shall examine

* The advocates of Proportional Representation go further than this. They point out that in some districts, divided into a number of single constituencies, a minority of voters secure a majority of representatives. If, however, the national majority carries with it a Parliamentary majority, such local results are of no consequence. But, it is alleged, national minorities have given Parliamentary majorities, and the General Election of 1874 is

later on what this simple and, apparently, indisputable proposition means in relation to the actual organisation of the State; but, meanwhile, I proceed to elucidate it. To carry it to its perfect conclusion, the proposal for Proportional Representation requires that the whole nation should be one constituency, and that all the electors should take part in voting upon the same list of candidates for Parliament. Only when minorities from one end of the

usually cited. It is stated that the Liberal vote in 1874 was 1,418,000, the Conservative 1,222,000, and that yet there was a Conservative majority of fifty. But this only gives part of the facts. The most authoritative pronouncement upon this election was made by Mr. Gladstone in the *Nineteenth Century* for November, 1878. "In many of the statements on the subject which I have noticed," he wrote, there is much to desire. Even in some, which have proceeded from Liberal quarters, I have observed untenable assumptions. It has been found, for example, that a larger number of Liberal than of Conservative votes were recorded at the last election, and the inference has been too rapidly drawn, that even at that time a majority of voters, though not of seats, were commanded by the Liberals. This is, of course, a fallacy; for the Tory Party had a large majority of the uncontested seats." Indeed, it would be difficult to find a happier example than the election of 1874 of how, under the present system, the real intention of the people is made manifest. The course of the bye-elections up to 1876 shows conclusively that the election result expressed public opinion.

country to the other can combine to vote for a number of candidates can they receive their full representation. This, however, would be so unwieldy that it is quite impracticable, and there is so much to be said in favour of Proportional Representation, even if imperfectly applied, that it must be discussed in the practical forms in which it is presented.

It will be convenient to discuss one form which is not favoured by the advocates of Proportional Representation in this country, but which has much to be said for it if the ideas underlying Proportional Representation are granted. I refer to the voting for party tickets as in Belgium.*

* The Belgian method is one of party vote. Constituencies are large as a rule (Brussels, for instance, returns twenty-one members), though some only return three members. Not only is the list of candidates made out by the party organisations, but these organisations determine the order in which the names are to be placed on the list. In other words, when a party has a certain number of seats at its disposal owing to the required number of votes being given for its list, it settles what representatives are to be chosen. A similar method prevails in Finland, where, since 1906, elections are carried on in constituencies returning from six to twenty-three members (except Lapland, which returns one); any group of fifty electors may nominate a list of not more than three candidates, and the electors

Under this system, instead of voting for individual candidates, electors vote for parties, and each party or section then receives seats in Parliament in proportion to the number of votes cast for it at an election. This scheme makes party grouping the most important consideration in forming the legislative organ, and is therefore much truer to the facts of government than any other Proportional Representation scheme. The Belgian method tends to eliminate personalities except in so far as they are national, except in so far as they embody great causes; and a party being interested in placing the advocacy and realisation of its principles and programmes in the most capable hands, Parliament would then not only reflect with mathematical accuracy the different opinions of the country, but would contain the ablest champions of these opinions. Large issues in political policy and prin-

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then vote not for men but for lists, although they may select preferences on the lists. A party may run more than one list, and votes not required to return one may be transferred to another. This is the idea of a representation of party modified, however, so as to give electors some power of nomination and also some power of preferential choice between individual candidates.

ciple would thus determine electoral results. Electors would vote because they were Liberal, Conservative, or Labour, and they would identify themselves with a general political outlook and faith. The worst feature of the present system—the man who has nursed a constituency by subscriptions and fêtes—would gradually disappear, and if the mere platform orator had a good chance of taking his place, the difference would be on the right side.

The British mind, however, would not submit to this simplest and most efficient form of Proportional Representation. Although modern facilities for moving about, and the widening of the fields of industrial exchange are destroying local social differences and levelling every district to the same standard of habit and thought, historical boundaries of counties and historical sentiments regarding towns, are sufficiently strong to retain our existing political habit of voting by constituencies; whilst the suspicions which have grown up round parties make the proposal I am discussing, I fear, an impossible one. We must, therefore, discuss Proportional Representation with other ways of carrying it out in mind.

Various methods of working Proportional Representation have been made from time to time. They have undergone a struggle for life, and at the moment two survive. The first is that constituencies should remain practically as they are, but that electors should indicate on ballot papers a preference for candidates other than the one they wish most of all to represent them. When no candidate has received an absolute majority of first preferences, lower preferences would then be counted, and thus the will of the majority would be ascertained. This machinery would only come into operation when there were more than two candidates for one seat vacant. The practical difficulty of valuing the different choices after the first has never been successfully overcome, for it is quite absurd to argue that a second choice is equal to a first. The General Will which a representative assembly should carry out is not something spread with uniform regularity over the whole of Society. It has points of intensity. An element of increasing passivity enters upon second and third choices which diminishes their political value compared with first choices, and

which, if we are to attempt to construct a system of political mathematical valuations must be allowed for. The advocates of Proportional Representation, however, have always shirked this and assume, quite erroneously, that a second preference should carry the same political value as a first preference.

The transferable vote in single member constituencies is, however, not the proportional representation which Hare proposed, Mill supported, and the Proportional Representation Society wants, but the imperfect scheme and the complete scheme both bear the above fault in their political mathematics. The transferable vote is only an alternative to the Second Ballot. It stops the auctioneering practices which parties would be certain to pursue between first and second votings, it diminishes the motives of revenge and the bad temper which so often determine Second Ballot results, it keeps within limits the impulse to vote with the winning side which in British politics would be very strong after the declaration of the first elections ; it thus attains, far better than the Second Ballot, the objects which the Second Ballot tries to reach. But it is not real Proportional

Representation. It is a method of securing the representation of majorities, whilst Proportional Representation aims at the representation of minorities. Under the title, "Representation of Minorities," John Stuart Mill wrote of Proportional Representation in his *Representative Government.*

The first essential to real Proportional Representation is the enlargement of constituencies so that five or six candidates* as a minimum may contest each. I must observe before discussing this further that obviously the very first effect of this change would be to increase materially the advantages of wealth in political contests. Not only would the costs of candidatures be increased with the size of the constituency, but even were this met by the State paying official expenses, the cost of keeping up an organisation in constituencies would be greater except to the members of a party which had a considerable preponderance of votes. And it must be remembered that in such large constituencies affording so much opportunity for manipulating and regimenting

* The Proportional Representation Society places the minimum at three, but that is evidently far too low.

votes,* and political conditions demanding that that opportunity should be taken, the power of the caucus would be increased because its existence would become more important. It may be laid down as a valid political law that the more complex the ballot paper, the more powerful will be the caucus. Now, the caucus is just that part of our party system of government which is most open to objection. The only counteracting influence which may come into operation as the result of the large constituency will be the greater facility given to the popular speaker to enter Parliament. Sails bulging with fine words are a greater political help in large constituencies than in small ones, but I do not wish to commend that change.

But if these things be true, how far is Proportional Representation to secure the

* Whoever has watched the increasing hold of the caucus upon School Board elections and the development of clever methods of manipulating the votes will not require any elaboration of this point. Now, School Board elections were very minor affairs and gave but the most imperfect idea of what the efforts of the caucus would be if Parliamentary elections were conducted on the same large scale of constituency with the same complexity of ballot papers.

representation of minorities. Minorities may influence parties when the caucus is weak, but Proportional Representation strengthens the caucus. Minorities may gain a few seats at reasonable cost out of many small constituencies, because national strength must effect local policy, but under a system of large constituencies the running of one candidate is about as costly as running a full ticket, and minorities testing their strength are therefore put to the same expense as majorities registering their predominance. Therefore, whatever may be said for Proportional Representation as an abstract theory, it can be embodied only in a political machinery which places obstacles in the way of some minorities which they do not now experience. When details are systematically considered, this interesting fact emerges. All systems of election in some way or other secure the representation of minorities, but each system imposes a test, special to itself, which favours a special kind of minority. Our existing system undoubtedly gives advantages to the minority of strong political determination. It is likely to result in the over-representation of political zeal. Proportional Representation, on the other

hand, favours rich minorities belonging to the political class of "mugwumps." Now, surely the former kind of minority is that most likely to contribute to common well-being and progress.

We can now carry the argument a step further and discuss whether the main purpose sought by Proportional Representation is of any real value to the State. I take that purpose to be the representation with mathematical accuracy of all opinions found in Society. So, if the machine works as is hoped, there will be found in Parliament a section of unattached representatives, voicing the opinions and prejudices of separate and unorganised electors. What are these minorities? One type of minority chiefly in the mind of those who favour Proportional Representation is that of very distinguished men who have been isolated from the living stream of the thought and action of their time. They were either never in the stream, or they were at some time whirled out of it. This minority would seek the championship of men of position in some walk of life foreign to that of politics, and if constituencies were large, it might have a chance of returning a candidate or

two. The early advocates of Proportional Representation had this in mind when they urged so strongly that the *élite* of the nation should be represented by the *élite* —that Proportional Representation would provide for Personal Representation in addition to Mass Representation. But, indeed, neither this *élite* nor its candidates would contribute anything to State efficiency. Were we on the outlook for tests for electors by which our registers might be reduced in numbers without being lowered in political efficiency, one such test might be whether the elector belonged to a small minority that might have grown but has not, that might have influenced parties but has not, that might have given direction and added volume to our national progress but has not. In other words, the non-political sections of the State have little to contribute to it except impractical advice and criticism, and it is a mistake in the reading of what representative government means to give them any special facilities to place spokesmen in Parliament.

Minorities that are of any account in the political life of Society, like the Socialists, are either forming parties that

are to take their place in the legislative organ under any conditions, or are attaching themselves as wings to existing parties and are influencing legislation in that way. Minorities which remain relatively small though exceedingly vital, because by educational work they are moulding public opinion and changing the axioms of public thought, may claim representation, but they get it through the policy which their work imposes upon all parties, and through members of other parties who are specially sympathetic with their views.* They do not send their own representatives into the House of Commons: they make it impossible for other parties not to represent them. The dead or stranded minorities have not earned the right to representation, and if it were granted to them, their representatives in Parliament would only exemplify the barrenness and political incompatibility of their supporters outside Parliament. There are dead opinions as well as dead men. Thus, the representation of minorities might increase the number of questions that Parliament is compelled

* This, I take it, is the defence for the Fabian Society's policy of permeation without forming any new party as the medium for Socialist legislation.

to discuss without augmenting in the least degree the volume of well-considered legislation or adding one sentence to profitable Parliamentary discussion. Hence, minority representation is not, as at first sight it appears to be, a simple and unanswerable demand of elementary justice.

But there is still the case of the active and the organised minority of considerable size to be dealt with, and this may be considered with the Temperance party in mind. At present these active minorities have to set their special aims in a programme containing other aims. They have to relate their demands to other demands and interests. They have to find a place in a party and a programme. It is urged as a charge against our present system, that, on the one hand, this means that an important section dictates the terms under which it is to ally itself with a party, and, in consequence, captures the whole party as the price of its allegiance; and, on the other, that it compels people who hold strong opinions on one question to vote in favour of other proposals to which they may really be opposed, in order to advance their main interest. These charges, however, are generally made for

partisan purposes, and are used by Oppositions to justify their antagonism to Government programmes. The element of fact which they contain is really of but little bulk. A party is not something apart from its actions—the wings which attach themselves to it are held to it not by some mechanical bond, but because it is guided by a general purpose common to them too. If the Temperance party, as a rule, is found co-operating with Liberals, it is because some aspect of underlying Liberal principle unites the other parts of the Liberal programme to the chief parts of the Temperance programme. Moreover, as I shall point out presently, the Temperance member in Parliament, however he may be elected, will have to join hands with some party in order to get his wishes carried into effect, so that this uniting process must be gone through inside Parliament if it be not in the first instance effected outside Parliament. If effected inside, it will be, in all probability, the result of a bald bargain for votes which may result in a rational and moral combination like the Republican *bloc* when Waldeck-Rousseau was Premier of France, but which is much more likely to produce a mere

business combination as seems to have been the case recently in Australia when the Labour Party was keeping Mr. Deakin in office, and exists there at the time of writing in the Deakin-Cook alliance. But whether moral or immoral, whether on national or on personal grounds, if the union be made inside Parliament only, the government which results will not have the same relation of child and parent to the people as governments now have. The people will not then have put the government in office; the electors who voted for important sections of its supporters will not be responsible for creating it. Groups of members of Parliament without popular sanction and perhaps against the wish of the country will then form governments.

If the people are to control governments, the people must sanction the combinations that make them. In other words, government combinations ought to be disclosed before elections, and elections should turn on them, because only under such circumstances can public opinion approve or disapprove of them. The various items of a party's programme are then more or less connected by the thread of a common outlook or idea; bartering

for votes may be carried on, but it will be always under difficulties; minorities, united only on narrow interests, will split in accordance with the degree of importance they attach to these interests, and this is beneficial to the country because it makes particularist sectionalism a small influence in elections. If government by discussion is to continue, the full programme of majorities must, in the first instance, be the subject of election debates, and the people at elections must not merely vote for a representative but for a political grouping. It is as essential that the electors should vote for a representative who is to act with a known group, as it is that they should vote for a representative who has promised certain reforms. The democratic choice is not a thing of persons merely, but also of groups. Democracy means voting for a government, not only voting for a representative.

Let me enforce my contention by following out in its stages what would happen to the temperance vote under Proportional Representation. Temperance electors would vote pretty solidly for the temperance candidates in the large constituencies created for the purpose of

Proportional Representation, and several such candidates would be returned. These temperance representatives in the House of Commons would have to give their support to some government. They would make bargains, but the necessities of the case would not allow the bargain to be that they would support the government only when it was dealing with temperance matters. The bargain would have to be that if the government introduced temperance legislation during its period of office, these temperance representatives would give it a general support in its other work. A government must have the general support of its allied sections. Now, let us assume that the most likely thing happens, and that the temperance representatives come to an agreement with a Liberal combination. These men were elected on a single-plank platform, but as representatives they have not only general powers to legislate on everything, but they are under obligation to do so. Sections of their supporters would not have voted for them, however, on general politics. They were returned by a combination which did not exist saving upon one point upon which alone they are representatives.

On everything else they are autocrats, and have no authority to speak for their electors. Under the present system, these electors would divide their votes between all parties, and representation would be much more real in consequence. They would vote for or against the anticipated work of a Parliament, not for a demonstration on one issue which may never even be discussed in that Parliament. Some of them would vote solely as temperance reformers, and thus say definitely that they were prepared to swallow a particular programme if it contained temperance pledges; others would vote against temperance pledges because they put other items of a programme before these in importance. Thus, the representatives returned by a combination of these sections under Proportional Representation, would not, when voting for budgets, factory laws, and other bills, be representing their supporters nearly so well as the members who are now returned on composite programmes. One of two things would happen. Temperance voters would soon discover that Proportional Representation did not in reality give them representation, and would lapse into the larger political

combinations where they are now found, or they would continue to send their special members to Parliament which, in its working, would be less truly representative than it now is.

The explanation of this becomes obvious when the function of Parliament and the nature of its governing activities are studied. Parliament under an aristocracy is mainly an administering and an executive authority; but Parliament under a democracy becomes essentially a legislating organ. Parliament is the organ for carrying out the will of the State, and, therefore, should be considered with that end in view. Now, the mistake involving several of the other mistakes which the advocate of Proportional Representation makes, is to think of Parliament only as the mirror of national opinion. Parliament is not a mirror; it is an active organ for carrying out efficiently the State will. The completeness of representation must, therefore, be judged, not by considering Parliament in its quiescent, but in its active aspect; in other words, we have not to consider the opinions of the 670 men who now compose it, but the common will of the majority which sustains the government.

Proportional Representation makes the mistake of assuming that representation is determined by elections—an individualist view; whereas representation is proved by the acts of the elected—a Socialist view. The most—not all—that electors do when voting for a candidate is to send a man to support or oppose a government, and the representatives of minorities elected under Proportional Representation will have to take their responsibility in that work unless one party has an absolute majority in Parliament—which could hardly happen under such a system. A majority must always be created for working purposes. It must be stable or it can carry out no consistent policy. But it need not be mathematically proportioned to its followers in the country. Indeed, there is much to be said in favour of the view that a government should be supported in Parliament by a majority larger than its proportion of electors, because a government ought to be independent of all sections except those which compose it. That is the condition of full responsibility.

This government majority, however, ought to represent the majority outside, but, as I have shown, under Proportional

Representation that need not be so. The majority in Parliament formed by independent members and groups upon which a government depends, need not represent an electoral majority outside. Under the present system, bodies of electors may be compelled to vote for whole programmes with parts of which they disagree, and by a rare accident the majorities of elected persons may not correspond to the majorities of electors; under Proportional Representation, citizens may be compelled to accept a government which their representatives had no mandate to form, and to acquiesce in a legislative policy which never had their sanction. Apart from that, a government created under this system would have all the weakness of a mechanical cohesion like the Continental *blocs*, and its actions would be sectional and the sum of its work would be fragmentary, as is the case under group government wherever it has been tried.

Thus, a system of Proportional Representation will exaggerate rather than remove those dangers which arise from the fact that governments may not be really representative. It is a method of election for securing the representation

of fragments of political thought and desire, and for inviting those fragments to coalesce after and not before elections. In times of political transition when old parties are splitting up, they are troubled with sectionalism as one of the symptoms of their disease. Every group within them regards its own nostrum without reference to greater national interests, and holds it up in the market-place as a quack does his pills. Proportional Representation seeks to fix in our system of government those evils which attend times of political transition and instability, to emphasise the irreconcilable dogmatic differences which the *élite* consider to be precious, and to prevent the intermingling of opinion on the margin of parties and sections of parties which is essential to ordered and organic social progress. Unfortunate will be the country which, having started on better ways, is either driven into these bad ones or in mistake adopts them of its own free will.*

* I have not discussed here the practical difficulties in working the scheme. They are many. The complicated ballot paper is serious, still more serious is the fact that luck must enter into the selection of the papers which are to be used not for first but for second and later preferences, and

With not a few of the criticisms passed against the present system by the advocates of Proportional Representation I thoroughly agree. The greatest care must be taken that a national majority of votes is reflected by a majority in the House of Commons.* This necessitates a frequent adjustment of constituency boundaries. Minority representation through split votes I consider to be a very minor danger always tending to right itself, having little effect at General Elections, and reaching its maximum of disturbance at bye-elections. But that the majority in Parliament should be mathematically proportionate to the majority in the country is not at all necessary. Indeed, mathematical thoughts are misleading, for the public opinion behind Parliament is only partly a question of the number of votes, it is also partly a question of the intensity of the voters' will. Majorities should be sufficient to carry out mandates and to shoulder responsibilities. Provided the duration of the life

perhaps most serious of all is the impossibility of conducting bye-elections under Proportional Representation.

* Although the federal character of our constitution may sometimes make this impossible mathematically.

of a Parliament is not too long—as it now is—it is more in accordance with the requirements of popular rule that a government should be supported by such a majority as makes it absolutely responsible for its actions, rather than that it should have to effect compromises and coalitions which do not reflect popular wishes or arise from popular demands. A system which, whilst safeguarding the country against a minority of votes returning a majority of members to Parliament, slightly exaggerates the majority of members given to the majority of voters really aids the working of representative institutions. The democratic reply to the case for Proportional Representation is shorter Parliaments, payment of official expenses and frequent redistribution; and that is the answer I give to the question: "How are the representatives to be kept in touch with the represented?"

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